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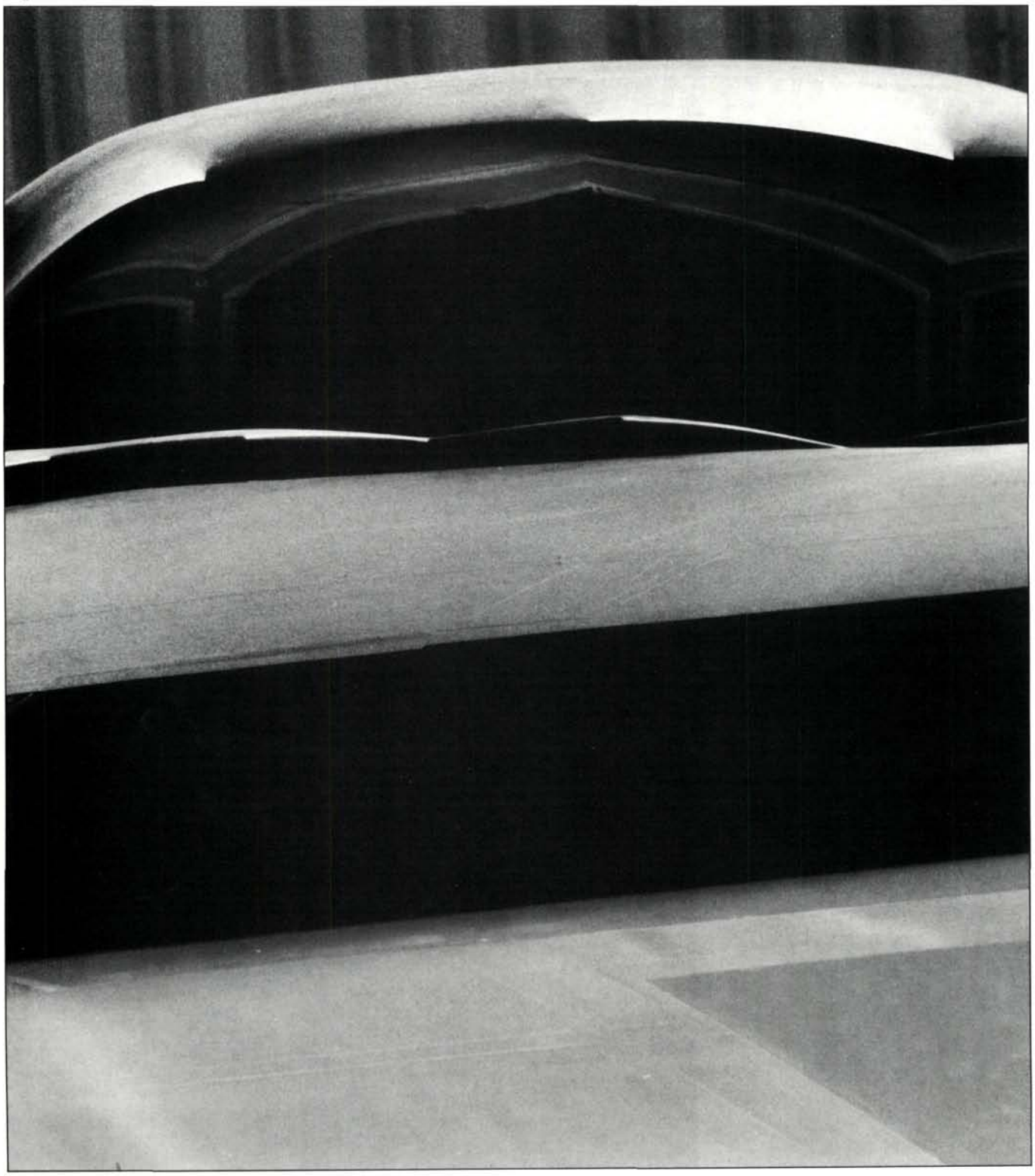

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CORRESPONDENCE

Killer stats

To the editors:

In your December 17 editorial on AIDS spending ("Dying for Dollars") you state that the problem isn't that at $1.3 billion (for next year) we're spending too much on AIDS, but that we're not spending enough on medical research overall. Don't cut AIDS funding, you say, increase funding for cancer and heart disease.

First, the actual figure, as my October article in *Commentary* noted, is about $1.6 billion for fiscal year 1990, more for 1991. TNR did not take into account the portion of the National Cancer Institute budget allocated to AIDS research. This $300 million difference is more, incidentally, than the federal government spends on any other disease besides cancer and heart disease. Your editorial also fails to answer my argument that in the short run medical researchers are a finite commodity, and thus spending considerably more on AIDS necessarily means stripping researchers from cancer and other diseases.

Even if the overall medical research budget grew tenfold tomorrow, it would still be unjustifiable that the fifteenth-leading killer (AIDS) would be the biggest recipient of federal funds. Nor would the AIDS activists necessarily be satisfied, because contrary to your editorial's assertion, I haven't heard of any who are satisfied yet. Your editorial states, "If breast and cervical cancer, which kill about 50,000 American women a year, receive a pathetic $50 million in research dollars, it is not because of anything ACT-UP has done." Actually, that requested allocation was for screening (as opposed to research) and was cut in the final bill to only $35 million, and even part of that was shaved off for—you guessed it—AIDS.

But you're right, the gross distortion in the budget is not the fault of the AIDS activists. The real fault lies with a gutless media (when was the last time you saw an article on wasteful AIDS spending?) and a gutless government. If Aunt Sophie dies of breast cancer or cousin Jake dies of prostate cancer because these areas were sidetracked for AIDS research, well, that's the price to pay for keeping the building from being picketed and to prevent one from being labeled a "homophobe."

MICHAEL FUMENTO
Lakewood, Colorado

Public service message

To the editors:

In Mickey Kaus's review of my book *Gratitude* ("First Serve," December 31), he notes that I am hospitable to the use of government sanctions to induce enrollment in national service and wonders how such sanctions could corral the affluent young. "For them Buckley holds out the cute coercion of the loss of a driver's license (why not deny them electricity, while we're at it?) and the prospect of unspecified 'auxiliary sanctions' to be applied by individual states."

I wrote (p. 138): "In order to achieve such a goal [voluntary national service] it is, above almost any other consideration, important to lean on what one might call the moral sanctions. Here what is needed is a conscious mobilization of social, philanthropic, and civic enthusiasm for the idea of national service." On the business of why not deny them electricity, one has to ask just who, really, is being cute. In Arkansas the denial of a driver's license to those who drop out of high school has the endorsement of the Democratic governor and of the relevant committee heads of the legislature. If society should come to deem exposure to civic enterprise as critical a way station to responsible citizenship as one more year of secondary school, and votes an equivalent sanction against that dropout, Mr. Kaus will then worry whether cutting off the electricity is the next, draconian step.

On Mr. Kaus's point that if there is work that needs doing, taxes should be levied to do it, my book seeks to make plain that the very idea of civic-mindedness and philanthropy is to get done things that aren't properly the business of the state to subsidize by redistribution. To be sure, a focus on the whole question of what is properly the business of the state illuminates the frontier, even if it is wobbly, that separates the liberal from the conservative, Mr. Kaus from me. Those who have difficulty with the presumption against the nationalization of concern will have difficulty in understanding the concept of voluntary national service.

And finally, a stylistic point. "Within pages . . . he's back to speechwriting. When he says he wants 'a national morale at home reaching as high as the Alps,' you sense that he's given up." If I had written that sentence to describe what I wished for the United States, Mr. Kaus would have been entitled to his wisecrack. But I was talking about Switzerland and its compulsory draft: "It gives that republic relative military invincibility. But something quite other, it can be plausibly argued, developed: a national cohesion. A sense of civic responsibility. A constant reminder of the need to make sacrifices. A national morale at home reaching as high as the Alps." When you adduce the Alps in the context of Switzerland, you are not injecting the speechmaker's steroids into a metaphor. "As American as apple pie" is OK, "as French as apple pie" is not OK, and one hopes that those who graduate from national service will grow ears that remark the difference; which reminds me to say in conclusion that I truly don't understand Mr. Kaus's suggestion that to preserve books that will otherwise rot in the Library of Congress is the equivalent of pyramid-building. I never suggested that no one would ever consult such books in the years to come, and my concern for them is not self-serving, given my conviction that my own books will reside in the Smithsonian.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.
New York, New York

Herr Pear

To the editors:

Anne McElvoy painted quite a humorous picture of that ridiculous figure currently running the government of the Federal Republic ("Herr Klutz," December 10). I offer one correction, however: "Birne" in German might refer to a light bulb (most often though: "Glühbirne"), but in the case of Helmut Kohl, "Birne" means "pear" and refers not only to "the shape of his large head" but also to his overall appearance, with his head in that case dwarfed by his oversized frame.

THOMAS KETRON
Berkeley, California

Still partisan

To the editors:

I read with great interest Nikolai Tolstoy's moving article on the plight of the Yugoslav anti-Communists who were massacred by Tito's Partisans at the end of World War II ("Bare Bones," December 24). The site of Kocevje in Slovenia was just one of countless pits where the Partisans dumped their executed war opponents. Terror in postwar Croatia was even more grotesque, and the number of Croats killed on the grounds of either real or perceived collaboration with Nazi Germany runs into tens of thousands.

One minor note, however. Simo Dubajic, one of the main figures behind the outrage committed at Kocevje, has not become a Christian repentant, as Mr. Tolstoy's essay might suggest. Last August Mr. Dubajic and his followers set off a "mini" revolution by committing acts of sabotage in parts of southern Croatia populated by ethnic Serbs. This was apparently meant

continued on page 42

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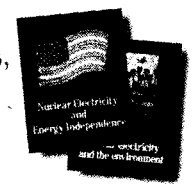

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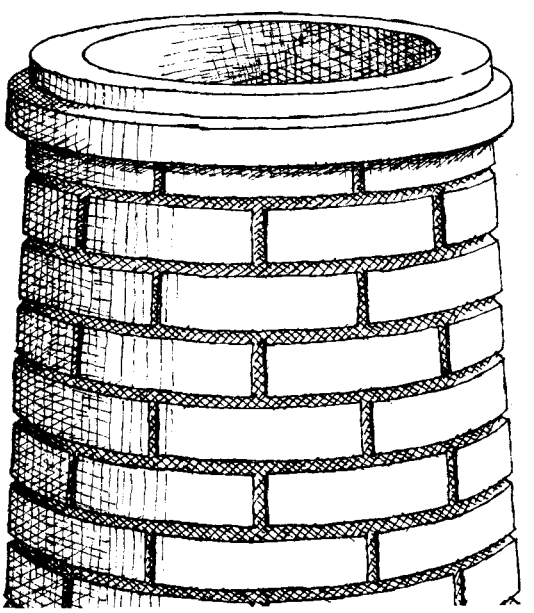

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 4, 1991

AFTER SADDAM

It has come down to a battle for the Arab future between Saddam Hussein and George Bush. The local despot on one side, the savior on the other. The dangers for the foreign power are obvious: Arabia is far afield for us. We are strangers. It is hard to understand, let alone order, a distant, largely alien world.

That the expedition became a necessity is as adequate proof as any of the troubled affairs of Araby. A local tyrant had risen. But there was no local answer to him, no deterrent worthy of the name. And the matter went beyond the military imbalance between the despot and his neighbors. There was no ideological answer to Saddam, no cultural limits that could rein him in. These limits had long since ceased to exist. If anything, the despot had risen out of the culture's very own sins of omission and commission, had emerged out of the terrible harvest of the last quarter century of Arab politics. He was hailed and embraced. He worked with his culture's most potent symbols.

We now have a testimony to all this from the self-appointed tribune of Arab nationalism in America, Professor Edward Said of Columbia University. Writing in *The New York Times* on January 11, Mr. Said depicts the bleak landscape of Arab politics. He writes of bureaucracies and secret police who rule "more or less unchallenged, although they are universally hated and feared," of a "remorseless Arab propensity to violence and extremism.... Today's Arab media are a disgrace.... Rarely does one find rational analysis, reliable statistics, complete undoctored descriptions of life in the Arab world with its terrible inequities, its self-inflicted wounds, its crushing mediocrity in science and many cultural fields. Allegory, complicated symbolism, and innuendo substitute for common sense."

Said gets it right about today's Arab culture. Well, almost. Saddam, he says, "is scarcely a representative of the Arabs. True, many have clambered aboard his vessel, but no one is fooled by what his captaincy is about." This represents a change in Said's own position—back in August he was more enthusiastic about Saddam, describing him as representing the "hidden anguish of the Arab soul." But this is not the issue here. What is clear is the bankruptcy of the Arab political order. On that we share Said's basic judgment.

Our Arab allies now say they want the job done swiftly and elegantly. They want Saddam destroyed, but they are not ready for a full reckoning with the forces off of which he fed. Though they are through with Saddam, they have no will to conquer Saddamism—its mix of cruelty and swagger, its cynicism. We should know this even as we sustain the case for the American mission in the Gulf.

Will there be hell to pay in the aftermath of a successful campaign against Saddam? No war begets the consequences men and women expect of it. And it would be sheer folly to speak of a postwar balance of power with any certainty. The case for resisting aggression must always be made on its own merits. We can be prudent about future consequences, cautious about excessive retribution, hopeful of the rehabilitation of the aggressor. With these principles established, war is a reasonable gamble. Were we to make the outcome of a good peace the precondition of resisting aggressors, the case for any war would be virtually impossible to sustain.

But what of the possible consequences? If Iraq were to be destroyed, Syria and Iran might step into the breach, the Iranians in particular renewing their bid for mastery in the Gulf. But neither Syria nor Iran poses the sort of threat to its neighbors or to the resources of the Gulf that Saddam does. Syria is at some

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remove from the Persian Gulf's oil and its fragile states. And Syria is poor: the oil wealth of Baghdad is nowhere to be found in Damascus. The narrow sectarian base of the Syrian regime (with its Alawi core) works in wondrous ways to rein in its rulers. In that large Arab universe, they are a distinct minority. Their bid for hegemony is easily dealt with by the larger Sunni world. Saddam is such a danger precisely because he is of the clan, a Sunni Arab who cannot be written out of the faith.

As for Iran, its bid for primacy is, for now, dead in its tracks. The Iranians tried to export revolutionary happiness and they failed. No amount of zeal could bridge the Arab-Persian divide, and Iran was never the threat to the Gulf it was thought to be. We needn't wax nostalgic about the Iranians, but even at their wildest they were restrained compared with the monstrous order Saddam put together.

So much for the two troublesome neighbors of the Iraqi state. There remains that other source of anxiety: the future of the Iraqi state and its territorial integrity. But the anxiety that the Shiite majority may rebel and claim the power of the state cannot be an American anxiety. The armies of the Western democracies surely did not venture into the Gulf to settle sectarian feuds or to shore up Sunni dominion in Iraq. In any case, no regime hatched by the Shiite exiles or the remaining mullahs in Iraq's shrine cities could be made of crueller material than Saddam's.

The Iraqi state may come apart, it is said. That too is a matter we can view with equanimity. To begin with, the fear may be exaggerated. It is unlikely our Turkish allies will countenance a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq, and they would surely snuff out any serious attempt at Kurdish autonomy. The more likely prospect after an Iraqi defeat would be a change of regime rather than of borders. Yet if the worst scenarios were to materialize, if that state were truly to come apart, we and Iraq's neighbors could live with that as well, and merely bid farewell to it as an imperial British concoction that failed.

What about an Arab revolt against an American display of force in the region? We should be skeptical about this view of the Arab response to Saddam's defeat. Which Arabs, after all, would mourn the defeat of the Iraqi despot? Surely not the Gulf Arabs, who are the principal targets of Saddam's aggression. To cope with his threat, they have broken with the old prohibitions of their world: they have openly embraced the presence of American power in their midst.

Nor would they grieve for Saddam in West Beirut, and among the Muslims of Lebanon. The Muslims of that country, particularly the Shiites, have an old account to settle with him. For two years Saddam's renegade Christian ally, General Michel Aoun, turned their life into sheer hell with Iraqi support. More to the point, Saddam decimated the ranks of the Shiite religious class in the Iraqi shrine towns, murdered the most notable among them, banished hundreds across the border to Iran. No one in West Beirut was taken in by the despot's call to a holy war. Nor were they conned in Cairo.

Palestinians, it is true, have hitched a ride with the conqueror of Kuwait. On both banks of the Jordan River, and in communities elsewhere, Palestinians have claimed Saddam's campaign as their own. Their leaders thought Saddam would grant them a share of the loot, even though Iraq had never previously shown great concern for the Palestinians. Still, in terms of power politics, the Palestinians command no army, hold no national territory. They are also deeply divided, as the assassination of two close Arafat aides last week showed. Moreover, the Palestinian leaders have begun to add up the costs of the financial ruin that befell their people in Kuwait. In the latest dispatches from the West Bank can be heard the reaction to what Yasir Arafat and his lieutenants have done. The journey with Saddam, the intellectual elite of the West Bank now concede, may have been the biggest mistake Arafat has yet committed. The morning after Saddam's defeat, it will be the Palestinians who will have to make amends for their stance.

We should brush aside the arguments that hold the Arabs as a people apart, sure not to learn from the defeat of an aggressor bent on remaking the Arab world in Iraq's image. The Arabs may learn. A more moderate Egyptian state emerged after the Six-Day War of 1967. It saw its way to peace with Israel; it bid farewell to its bluster and its crusading zeal.

Between the foreign savior and the local despot: such, then, is the battle. It remains for the Arabs to think through the verdict this sort of battle pronounces on the Arab condition. For us, there is simply the imperative of fighting well, of delivering on the promise made by our leaders that the war will be concluded with dispatch, and with minimal casualties. That much we owe the young men and women we dispatched to check the disorder of Araby.

GORBACHEV'S TANKS

Among the fifteen Lithuanians killed by Soviet forces last Sunday in Vilnius was one Rolandas Jankaukas. Two months ago this 22-year-old returned from a tour of duty as a submarine electronics specialist for the Soviet navy. He was shot dead by the Soviet army because he was part of a peaceful crowd defending a television tower in Vilnius, his hometown.

The story of Rolandas Jankaukas says a great deal about the events unfolding in the Baltic states. The machinery of Soviet repression is now having to control itself. It began in Lithuania with Soviet troops enforcing the draft; it continued with the slaughter of Jankaukas and his fellow countrymen; as we write, the end looks bloodier still. It is becoming clearer that, since the Soviet armed forces are disproportionately staffed

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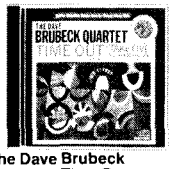

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by the ethnic minorities they are required to repress, this will not be the last time that Soviet servicemen kill Soviet servicemen.

The similarity to 1956 has been widely noted. Soviet tanks and Soviet guns are being used as lethally against Lithuania as they were against Hungary, and their use is defended with essentially identical lies. It says something about the roots of glasnost that, in a twinkling of Gorbachev's eye, it can revert to levels of distortion even Brezhnev might envy. The intervention was planned for at least two months, with great precision. It was initiated, with cynical calculation, while the West was distracted elsewhere. But there is also a critical difference. This time it is an act of desperation, not of confidence; this time it is the gamble of a political elite in profound crisis, and not the cocksure repression of a regime unable to imagine its own demise.

What of Mikhail Gorbachev's role in this? His Western admirers are in acute discomfort, amazed that a man who has just amassed near-dictatorial powers in his revamped presidency should choose to use them, stunned that he should suspend the freedom of the broadcast media and intimidate the press when it suits him, horrified that perestroika should seem now to mean the crushing of human beings with tanks. Yet no one who saw Gorbachev's complete lack of remorse, or witnessed his energetic verbal attack on the Lithuanians two days after the Soviet army assaulted their country, can doubt that he is in control of this strategy.

Why should anyone have ever doubted it? Andrei Sakharov warned of it just before he died. Eduard Shevardnadze resigned because of it in December. Gorbachev has never really admitted the possibility of what Article 72 of Stalin's Soviet Constitution allows: the right to secede from the Soviet Union. He has known for some time that this union could only be held together by force of arms, and his ascent to dictatorial power shows a calculated bid to marshal the forces necessary for the violence.

The crackdown in the Baltics, then, is not—or not simply—some terrible betrayal of perestroika, but the inevitable playing out of Gorbachev's essential purposes. Gorbachev always conceived of his reforms—political liberalization and democratization—not as ends in themselves but as means to an end, the revitalization of the Soviet Union. But for the Soviet Union to be revitalized, it must continue to exist. No doubt Gorbachev once naively believed that Lithuania, Georgia, and the rest would choose to remain in his reformed Soviet Union. But there was never any chance of that. The Soviet Union cannot remain united except by gunfire. It has long been clear—at least to us—that Gorbachev's plan was from the beginning to pursue liberty for the sake of revitalizing the union. Now that liberty threatens union, he has, predictably, chosen union. Enforcing that choice will require not just putting down revolts on the periphery, but repressing the nascent civil society that has begun to flourish in all fifteen republics, including the Russian federation.

Gorbachev's government has brutally repressed secessionist revolts before: in Kazakhstan in 1986, in Georgia and Uzbekistan in 1989, in Azerbaijan and Tadzhikhistan last year. According to the human rights organization Helsinki Watch, more than 200 people were killed in such incidents. Tanks, machine guns, and, in Georgia, chemical agents were among the instruments of coercion.

The difference now is the shamelessness of it, the openness with which it is admitted, which is designed to shock and terrify the Soviet population. It is instructive in this regard that Gorbachev chose first the Lithuanian republic to advertise his violence. Lithuania presents the least ominous threat to the center, since its resistance forces have scrupulously adhered to nonviolence and are largely unarmed. Its population is not as threatening, or as important to Moscow, as those of, say, Georgia or the Ukraine. It is also extremely vulnerable to economic sanctions from the center. Gorbachev, like all those intent on intimidation, has picked what he supposes to be an easy victim. He is clearly intent on an unmistakable victory—bloody, if necessary—to send a signal to the others.

But Lithuania is instructive for the West too. Of all the Soviet republics, its claims to independence, and those of its neighbors Latvia and Estonia, are the most powerful. Lithuania was grabbed by the Soviet Union in the Hitler-Stalin pact. Gorbachev's desire to retain it as part of his empire is all the proof that's needed that, so long as he remains wedded to the structure of the old Soviet Union, he is still, essentially, Stalin's heir.

The United States no longer has any excuse for vacillating on this issue. If we can deploy over half a million troops to defend the sovereignty of Kuwait, we can surely expend a few uncompromising words and deeds in defense of the sovereignty of Lithuania. The argument that we still need Soviet support in the Gulf and so must stay silent does not stand up to scrutiny. The Soviet Union's endorsement of the U.N. resolution supporting the use of force in the Gulf is irreversible. Their military assistance is negligible. We can perform the task in the Gulf—indeed, will have to perform the task—without them.

Why, then, does the Bush administration still equivocate? Perhaps it is not surprising from a president who conceives of foreign policy as a series of personal relationships between himself and other heads of state. As Saddam Hussein is his enemy, Gorbachev, like the butchers of Tiananmen Square, is his friend. President Bush initially seemed to express more sympathy with Gorbachev's plight than with the Lithuanians', describing their struggle for independence merely as part of Moscow's "extraordinarily complex problems." For some time the White House has sacrificed American principles and Baltic liberties to the increasingly dubious task of advancing Gorbachev's political career. But now at least the Bush administration—and others—must clearly see what a number of us have been saying for some time. The moral and material interests of the United States—and those of the people and peoples of the Soviet Union, for that matter—do not lie with Mi-

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khail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. And the time is long past when his fall could be seen as something Americans should dread. Indeed, it is fast becoming something we should hope for.

There is also clearly a chance that our actions could now make a difference. The fact that the Soviet government wishes to perform its unsavory business while the West is distracted suggests that it fears the possible results of Western attention. Gorbachev, after all, is not Khrushchev, or even Brezhnev: his repression is waged from the top of a teetering edifice, subject to the buffeting of its own internal politics and increasingly propped up by Western diplomatic and economic support. We should withdraw that support. The United States should cancel the forthcoming summit with Gorbachev, explaining that it will be rescheduled only if he reverses course. We should further threaten to suspend all aid and credit guarantees to the Soviet Union if the Soviet government uses any further armed force in the repression of any of the fifteen republics. And we should open diplomatic relations with all of the republics, including, of course, the Baltic states. This could once, perhaps, have been derided as mere political posturing. As the tanks perch once more on the edge of Vilnius and other Baltic cities, it is a moral imperative. As the editor of the besieged Lithuanian newspaper, *Respublika*, told *The New York Times*, "The terrible thing is not that we have a new dictator, but that the whole world loves him."

NOTEBOOK

HERE WE GO AGAIN: As the country steels for war abroad and recession at home, as issues of the economy, trade, diplomacy, and the budget loom large, the Democrats in Congress are showing off their usual political skills. The first bill of the 102nd Congress is a new, improved version of the 1990 Civil Rights Act. Put aside the highly problematic substance of the bill—the chance of provoking unofficial race quotas in the hiring policies of many companies—and consider the supremely dumb politics of it. With a few minor additions, the bill is a Xerox of the one President Bush vetoed last session, and would likely veto again. It raises the one issue on which Democrats clearly lost in the 1990 congressional elections, hands Mr. Bush a proven vote-winner for 1992, and distracts attention and energy from the real racial issue of the day: the plight of the predominantly black underclass. Welcome back, dudes.

NOTICE: In memory of the late Marie Syrkin, poet, essayist, teacher, and Zionist leader, the Marie Syrkin Fellowship in Letters in Jerusalem has been established. The Fellowship will provide for a month's residence for a writer in Jerusalem at Mishkenot Shaananim, the restored nineteenth-century "tranquil dwellings" opposite the Old City walls, as well as transportation costs. The Fellowship is open to writers in all the forms, though the judges will honor Marie Syrkin's preference for belles lettres over scholarly research. The judges for 1991 are Irving Howe, Cynthia Ozick, and Leon Wieseltier. Inquiries and applications should be sent to The Marie Syrkin Fellowship, 1220 19th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington DC 20036.

HEY, JUDIS: With this issue, John B. Judis, author of last week's cover story on Senator Bill Bradley, becomes a contributing editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. Mr. Judis is the Washington correspondent of *In These Times*, a Chicago-based political weekly, with which he has been associated since 1976. He is the author of *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (Simon and Schuster, 1988) and of *Grand Illusion: Champions and Critics of the American Century*, forthcoming from Farrar, Straus and Giroux next winter.

SINE-AID: The far right is beginning to behave in an unpredictable fashion. Take the Heritage Foundation, principled opponent of all Communist regimes—or is it? The group's latest report leapfrogs the current debate about the wisdom of sanctions against China by advocating that the United States re-establish *military* ties with China. According to policy analyst Andrew Brick of Heritage's Asian Studies Center, "The military sanctions adequately have expressed U.S. repugnance at the 1989 killings." His report argues that the People's Liberation Army is split between old-guard hardliners and young moderates. This may well be the case, but it doesn't support Brick's conclusion that renewed links with the United States—including the transfer of military technology, no less—would strengthen the hand of the young Turks. One expects to hear this kind of blather from administration Sinophiles, not their right-wing critics.

IN BLACK AND WHITE:

New York Panel Backs School for Minority Men

—*New York Times*, January 10

South Africa Moves To Integrate Schools

—*New York Times*, same page, same day

CROSS PORPOISES: Last month's dedication of the Marine Mammal Pavilion, the big new dolphin tank at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, was politely picketed by animal rights activists who protested that the stars of the show inside were being held captive. That's

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true, of course. But the picketers would do better to direct their energies toward making sure that conditions inside the joint are as humane—or rather, as cetacean—as possible. Nothing has done more to build public support for efforts to protect dolphins and other whales than shows of this kind, which display the high intelligence of these creatures before large numbers of people. The performing dolphins, whether they know it or not (and it wouldn't be that surprising if they did know it), are making an entirely worthwhile sacrifice for their brothers, sisters, and cousins on the outside.

FÉLICITATIONS: We discovered, just after we published Hélène Carrère d'Encausse's essay on Soviet nationalities ("Springtime of Nations," TNR, January 21, translated by Carol Cosman), that Mme D'Encausse had been elected to the Académie Française. So far as we know, there was no connection between those two events. ●

Postwar planning in the Mideast.

PEACE LATER?

By Morton Kondracke

JERUSALEM

When members of the ruling Likud faction of Israel's parliament caucused on January 3, Topic A on the agenda was not the impending war in the Gulf but the kind of postwar approach the government should take toward Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hard-line rightists argued for a crackdown, reflecting popular rage with the Palestinians' three-year intifada and their siding with Israel's enemy, Saddam Hussein. But a majority that apparently included Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir decided that, assuming Saddam is defeated, Israel needs to be ready with a new peace offer to the Palestinians—both to placate the presumptive war victor, George Bush, and to take advantage of the humiliation of Saddam's allies, Yasir Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Israel also needs peace and foreign investment to absorb the Soviet Jews who are arriving at a rate of more than 30,000 per month.

The Likud offer, based on elements of the 1979 Camp David agreement, which led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and on Shamir's May 1989 peace proposal, involves elections, extensive autonomy for the Palestinians, and eventual talks about sovereignty. In the past anything short of a prior commitment to an independent Palestinian state has been unacceptable to Palestinians. But as one Likud leader put it, "In a state of shock and depression after Saddam is defeated, maybe they will accept something less." In effect, even Israel accepts that "linkage" of a kind exists between the Gulf crisis and the Palestinian issue, but it does not want Saddam Hussein and his friends dictating the terms.

As the Likud discussion shows, a surprising amount of thinking has been going on here, and also in the Arab world and parts of Washington, about the shape of the Middle East after the war. If the United States clobbers Saddam, many expect power in the Arab world to shift—at least temporarily—from radicals such as Saddam and the PLO to a conservative-moderate axis led by America's allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Everyone expects President Bush to push for a renewed Mideast peace process, in order to prevent power from devolving to fundamentalist, anti-Western Islamic radicals now making headway in Jordan, the West Bank, and elsewhere. Israel wants the United States to promote peace alone, or with the Soviet Union, and not through a U.N.-supervised international conference, where European countries, especially France, would likely try to revive the PLO as negotiating agent for the Palestinians. For its efforts to conciliate Saddam, France has earned the near-total distrust and disgust of top Israelis and many American diplomats.

Other items in our Mideast allies' post-Saddam scenarios include peace talks between Syria and Israel about the Golan Heights ("There could be negotiations," says Shamir), simultaneous Saudi-Egyptian pressure to tame Syria's Hafez Assad (who spent his first $2 billion in Saudi aid equipping an armored division, but not for use against Iraq), and Saudi-led redistribution of Gulf oil wealth to poor Islamic peoples, including Palestinians, Turks, and Pakistanis. Instead of paying extortion money to terrorists and military dictators, it's hoped, a more self-confident Saudi Arabia would play a new kind of "Rial-politik," rewarding moderation.

The scenario also envisages a modest U.S. troop presence in newly liberated Kuwait and regional arms talks to control nuclear and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. Israel wants to parley with the Arabs face-to-face, thereby gaining implicit, and later explicit, diplomatic recognition. In Saudi Arabia top diplomats say "there is a genuine consensus" for peace with Israel—provided, of course, the Palestinian problem is solved. But Saudis do not seem wedded to the idea of an independent Palestinian state.

All this high-level conjuring assumes an allied victory, of course—meaning that Saddam is driven quickly from Kuwait in a week or two and, optimally, is deposed; that his military machine crumbles; that the anti-Saddam coalition hangs together; and that Arab public opinion recognizes that Saddam-style confrontationism doesn't work.

Other outcomes produce less cozy scenarios, and a few ghastly ones. No one expects a clear Iraqi military victory, but Israeli intelligence thinks it knows what constitutes Saddam's idea of a strategic triumph: holding off the United States for three weeks to a month,

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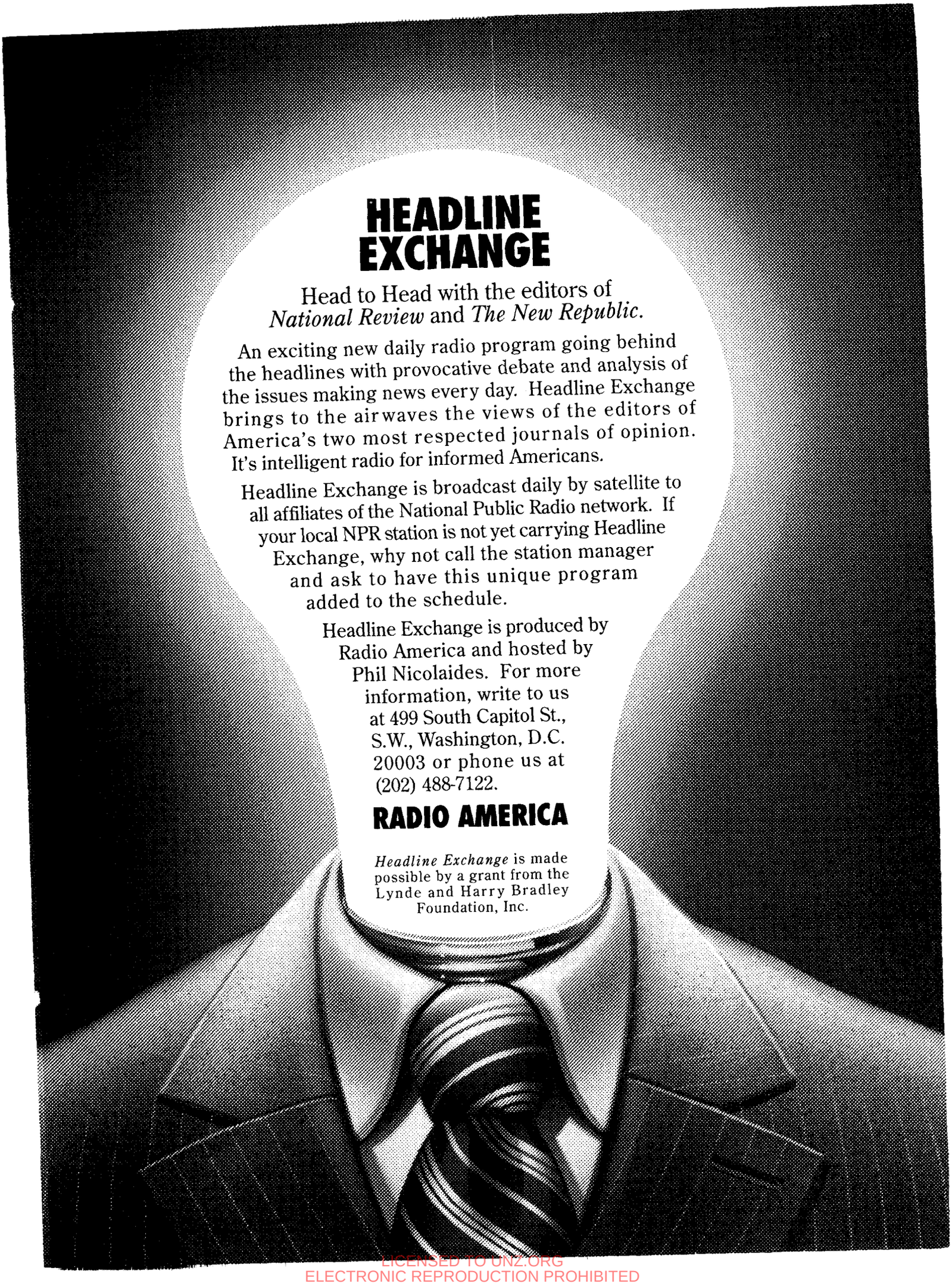
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causing 10,000-20,000 American casualties, and forcing Bush to call for a cease-fire. Even if bloodied and forced to leave Kuwait, the Israelis think, Saddam would claim that he had stood up to the world's only superpower. The Arab masses, having been led by their governments to expect a two-day war, would anoint him as their leader. Saddam's victory would be all the sweeter if he could split the U.S.-led alliance by dragging Israel prominently into the war.

The worst outcome anyone can imagine is that the United States would be militarily embarrassed and asked to get its forces out of Saudi Arabia, which would then revert to appeasing Saddam and a revived radical front. A more plausible scenario is that Saddam would leave Kuwait with his forces and prestige substantially intact. In this event, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and Americans all agree, the United States would have to station large numbers of forces in Kuwait to contain Iraq. Top Saudi officials say they'd favor keeping economic sanctions against Iraq, as well as an arms embargo. But the region would remain insecure and most hopes for arms control and peace settlements probably would not come to pass. For one thing, Israel would still feel threatened by Iraq and, Likud moderates say, the country would be in no mood for accommodation with Saddam's partisans in the occupied territories.

All over the Middle East and to some extent in Washington, experts and activists believe that war will change the region utterly. Some Israeli leaders say they've seen documents indicating that Turkey is thinking about seizing the oil-rich Mosul region of Iraq. (The Turks deny this). Many Saudis worry that Iraq might be so devastated that it would not be able to balance the power of Iran, Syria, and Israel. Some pro-PLO leaders in the West Bank say they expect the war to be "a death blow" to the organization, although others hope it might be revived by a Bush administration eager to curry favor with the Arabs after attacking Iraq.

Meanwhile, leaders of Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist group on the West Bank, have been saying that, war or no war, they will inevitably take over leadership of the Palestinians and would already win between 50 and 60 percent of any popular vote in the territories. Also, they say, their cousins, the Muslim Brotherhood, will take over the government in Jordan, so that the "Jordanian option" for a Palestinian settlement will be back. Only this time, without King Hussein.

Israeli intelligence thinks this forecast is credible. Muslim Brothers won surprising victories in Jordan's first parliamentary elections in 1989, now have five Cabinet seats including the education and welfare ministries, and are demanding the creation of a "popular army" of 100,000 armed civilians. It was to appease Palestinian and Islamic sentiment that King Hussein functionally sided with Saddam after the invasion of Kuwait. Many Israelis think that if King Hussein does not crack down on the Brotherhood, he will lose his throne—possibly just after the war. Others say he can be saved, but only with heavy backing from the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Israel clearly wants the king to survive, fearing that the Muslim Brothers will be militantly anti-Israel. For what it's worth, Hamas leaders in the West Bank (and even some PLO activists) say that the fundamentalists will be less radical than the Israelis fear. If Israel offers West Bank elections, they say, they will compete and "take whatever Israel gives," much as the Brothers have taken what King Hussein has given. They tell Americans that they are willing to live in peace with Israel. The Israelis suspect this is just a tactical concession. "The difference between Hamas and the PLO is the difference between a knife and a bomb . . . between Göring and Goebbels," one Likud leader said.

The best American thinking on the postwar Mideast has been done not by the Bush administration, which has been busy with crisis management, but by the Washington Institute on Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank that already has produced an interim report on post-Saddam policy options. (The Institute paid for part of my trip for this article). According to Institute director Martin Indyk, "It's likely that the region will be in a state of shock after the crisis and that there will be a window of opportunity, not open long, for the United States to shape the postwar environment."

The Institute proposes U.S. support for Israeli-Palestinian talks without the PLO; American leadership of postwar diplomacy, rather than an international conference or U.N. control; peace talks between Israel and Saudi Arabia, other moderate Arab states, and, possibly, Syria; face-to-face arms talks between Israel and the Arabs; and postwar security arrangements that include a modest U.S. presence in the Gulf and support for Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

In Israel the thinking is already under way—driven in part by the fact that it will need some $20 billion in foreign investment (plus $50 billion from domestic sources) over the next five years to absorb the 1 million Russian Jews expected to arrive by 1993, most of them highly skilled. Much of the money has to come from the United States, in the form of bank loans and government guarantees. Israel's leaders think the money will be hard to get without peace and good relations with the Bush administration.

Nevertheless, a hard-line minority in the Knesset wants to "transfer," i.e., deport, the Palestinians in droves to Jordan. Other Knesset members merely want to toughen Israeli responses to the intifada. But a moderate Likud faction led by Bennie Begin (Menachem's son), Dan Meridor, and Ehud Ohlmert is arguing for a new offer to the Palestinians. It would involve "a taste of independence," "one inch from limited sovereignty," as one Likud leader put it, including full Arab governance of every aspect of life except foreign and military policy. The Begin faction hopes that Saudi Arabia would fund a Palestinian development bank to bring prosperity to the territories. This faction seems to have the support of Defense Minister Moshe Arens and of

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Shamir, who said that his May 1989 proposal should form the basis for new talks, but that "there could be additional aspects."

Of course, this is the Middle East, the graveyard of optimism. There are any number of ways that peace hopes could be dashed, and they are already visible. Likud leaders say they will negotiate with whomever the Palestinians elect, but then they rule out PLO and Hamas activists. The Palestinians detest Israel so much that they may once again reject a peace offer. The Saudis say they now want peace with Israel, but they are also afraid of Islamic fundamentalists, who will want Jerusalem restored to Arab control. The United States, even after shedding blood, may be too slow or too clumsy to take full advantage of the opportunities its prestige and authority create. But if Saddam is defeated quickly, there is a chance for a stable Middle East, just a chance. ●

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

By Fred Barnes

Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut was impressed last August when Secretary of State James Baker gave senators a private briefing on President Bush's hard-nosed policy against Saddam Hussein, and he sent Baker a note. In October Baker briefed again. When he spotted Lieberman, Baker cupped his mouth and lip-synched the words, "Thank you for your note." Lieberman heard nothing more after the briefing. So on January 2, the day after he arrived in Washington from the Christmas break, he telephoned Fred McClure, Bush's congressional lobbyist. He informed McClure that he supported Bush's authority to go to war against Saddam if Iraqi forces weren't out of Kuwait by January 15. Fine, said McClure. But for the next eight days, as Democratic opposition to war with Iraq coalesced, Lieberman was not contacted by the White House. Then, on January 10, two days before the Senate vote, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger called him. Would he co-sponsor a resolution giving Bush authority to initiate war? Lieberman said he'd be "proud to."

Sorry to dwell so long on Lieberman, but he reveals something bizarre about the run-up to the Senate and House votes on January 12. Democrats who support Bush's policy courted the White House, not the other way around. And when the White House finally succumbed to a congressional vote, it was almost too late to put together a winning bipartisan coalition. But not quite. Bush was lucky. Democrats who backed his policy—Bush Democrats—organized themselves. They formed an unusual coalition, consisting largely of Southern conservatives and moderates, Jewish liberals, and (especially in the House) committee chairmen.

The White House had its reasons for being standoffish. When Democratic Representatives Stephen Solarz of New York and Robert Torricelli of New Jersey talked to Bush in the Oval Office before Christmas, they got the standard White House line. "What I want is a unanimous resolution, or at least to win handily," Bush said. "If you can't do that, or if you have a long, divisive debate, I'd rather you didn't bring it up." Solarz said a vote was likely to be forced on Bush whether he liked it or not. And Democratic opposition was mushrooming. Solarz cited the debate at the Democratic Caucus a few days earlier. Of thirty Democrats who'd spoken, he was the only one to back Bush.

The other source of White House reluctance was tactical. Bush doesn't relish confrontation with Democratic congressional leaders. He'd rather deal. Last year Brent Scowcroft, his national security adviser, worked out the amount of Pentagon spending with Democratic Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia. At the outset of Bush's presidency, Baker reached a compromise with Senate Democrats on Nicaraguan policy. Bush and House Speaker Tom Foley got the budget summit going last summer. This time splitting the difference with antiwar Democrats would be disastrous for Bush's policy, signaling weakness to Saddam. So compromise was ruled out. But Bush didn't want a divisive battle in Congress either. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, reinforced his view that a vote would be bad.

Over the first weekend in January, Bush realized he'd have to fight in Congress. On January 8 he formally asked for a resolution of support. "I've changed my thinking," he told Lieberman and five other Democrats who conferred with him at the White House on January 10. "I'd love to have 60 or 70 votes in the Senate. But if I get a majority, I'd be satisfied." A majority was not assured. One of the Democrats at the meeting, Senator Bob Graham of Florida, was queasy. He pressed Bush to "meld" his position with that of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. Bush, Lieberman says, appeared "troubled." When he got back to his office and began phoning Democrats, Lieberman also grew anxious. "I couldn't find enough hard Democratic support to make me comfortable." Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, for example, was "uncertain."

The next morning things looked no better. Scowcroft had met with Gore for better than an hour the night before and come away figuring Gore would vote against Bush. Lieberman read in *The Washington Post* that Graham was allied with Mitchell. Alarmed, he called Graham. "I'm still inclined to support the president," Graham said. Lieberman relayed that news to the White House. By day's end, Lieberman was more optimistic. But it wasn't until the next morning, the day of the vote, that Gore notified Senate Republican lead-

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er Bob Dole that he would back Bush. "Gore was very important because of his stature," says Lieberman. The vote was 52-47. Gore paid an immediate price. After declaring his position, he was hounded by protesters shouting, "Gore, war, Gore, war," as he walked to his office.

The House was easier. A corps of smart, younger Democrats—Solarz, Torricelli, Les Aspin, chairman of the Armed Services Committee—supported Bush from the start. On January 9 they met with Bush in the Cabinet Room. Torricelli told the president that his policy of stern action against a violator of international law was "a motivating reason for me to be in the Democratic Party." Bush "accepted that," according to Torricelli. He and Solarz insisted the language of the draft resolution be changed. "We want to maximize the support we can get in the House without reducing your flexibility," Solarz told Bush. White House officials had balked at the word "authorizes," fearing it implied that Bush required congressional backing. Solarz persuaded them it didn't.

Bush's friendship with senior Democrats helped. Ten committee chairmen bucked Foley and Majority Leader Richard Gephardt to vote with Bush. Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, backed Bush in part "because I have full confidence that our president and my friend George Bush will act in a responsible and compassionate fashion." The White House paid special attention to Representative John Dingell, chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. At the White House breakfast for 130 House members on January 11, White House lobbyist Gary Andres made sure Dingell was seated at Bush's table. The president followed up by telephoning Dingell a few hours later. After their chat, Bush told aides Dingell probably was on board. He was.

On the first day of floor debate, January 10, Bush Democrats didn't rebut the speeches of anti-war Democrats. They were delighted to let the 60 uncommitted Democrats hear left-liberal Representatives Ron Dellums and Barbara Boxer of California and Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts. "We let the [Democratic] leadership's position be characterized by those people," said a Bush Democrat. "It really helped." The vote was 250-183. Bush got 86 Democrats (10 in the Senate) and, Torricelli says, ten more were available if needed.

Although some Jewish Democrats sided with Bush, most didn't. The White House had hoped for better because of Israeli support for Bush's stand against Saddam. But the issue was never cast in terms of Israel. Representative Howard Berman of California, who backed Bush, said he "never had a conversation with AIPAC [the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee] or any other major Jewish organization." Ten of 24 Jewish Democrats in the House supported Bush, one (Lieberman) of five in the Senate.

After the vote, Lieberman was summoned to Dole's office to meet Iraqi Ambassador Mohamed al-Mashat. Asked what could be done for peace, the ambassador urged senators to fly to Baghdad as a peace delegation. "For our answer," said GOP Senator John Warner of Virginia, "we'll yield to our leader, Senator Dole." Dole said nothing. Moments later, a congratulatory phone call came from Bush. Dole spoke first, then put Lieberman on the line. "This is the first call I've made," Bush said. "I know it was a tough vote. I appreciate your leadership." Lieberman said he'd be wary of giving the power to go to war "to some people." But not to Bush. ●

Danger for the U.S. at sea.

MINE SHAFT

By Michael Willrich and Jon Cohen

Steaming through the Persian Gulf at dawn on July 24, 1987, Lieutenant Richard Vogel, U.S. Navy, suddenly found himself airborne—and flying head first into a full-scale naval embarrassment. Vogel was stationed on the supertanker *Bridgeton*, a Kuwaiti vessel sailing under the American flag and flanked by three U.S. warships. Back then, Iran was battling Kuwait's friend Iraq. The United States had stepped in as Kuwait's bodyguard, and the *Bridgeton* was the first tanker to enjoy the mighty Navy's protection. But then the *Bridgeton* bumped a mine.

"It actually lifted us off our feet three or four inches," Vogel said at the time. It also ripped a 300-square-foot hole in the *Bridgeton* and sent the Navy ships cowering behind the wounded vessel as it chugged through the Gulf. The Pentagon was razzed with deservedly snotty headlines, like *Newsweek*'s "Oops, We Forgot the Minesweepers."

With the Navy chugging around the Gulf once again, the threat of mines is back. So are the inadequacies of the U.S. minesweeping force. "The U.S. Navy still has minimal minesweeping capabilities," says Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Mine warfare is unglamorous and tends to be neglected by navies, and none more so than the U.S. Navy." The United States has twenty-seven ocean-going minesweeping ships—about 200 fewer than the Soviets—and relies largely on its NATO allies to keep the seas clean. Determined to avoid a *Bridgeton* rerun, the Navy has deployed to the Gulf four sweeps and six Sea Stallion helicopters capable of hunting and neutralizing mines.

Although the Iraqis are famous for chemical weapons and long-range missiles, you rarely hear about their mine inventory. Maybe that's not surprising, considering that the war plan currently on President Bush's desk calls for an air and land attack. Still, the Pentagon

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acknowledges that an amphibious assault has not been ruled out—and mines could become a factor if there is a drawn-out war. Navy Lieutenant Commander Edward Lundquist, a Pentagon spokesman, confirms that Saddam now has both Soviet- and Western-type mines in his naval arsenal.

During the Iran-Iraq war, Iraqi helicopters laid both coastal and anti-shipping mine fields in the Gulf. This may account for the fourteen mines sighted since December 21 south of Kuwait, and the reports of mines hitting a Cypriot-flagged freighter near the Strait of Hormuz and a Saudi Arabia oil rig in the Gulf itself. Then again, unnamed U.S. officials told *The Washington Post* last week that the mines appeared to be recently laid by Iraq to thwart a U.S. Marine amphibious assault.

An ideal weapon for an underdog like Saddam, the mine is simple to make, cheap, easy to lay, and hard to eliminate. In 1950 Korean sampans and junks laid a field of 3,000 mines off Wonsan, delaying a U.S. amphibious assault for three weeks. "The United States Navy has lost control of the sea," an American admiral grimaced at the time, "to a country without a navy, employing a weapon thought to be obsolete at the time of the First World War, laid from vessels that were in use at the time of the birth of Christ." The 401,000-ton *Bridgeton*, surrounded by superpower fighting ships outfitted with the sexiest hardware, was disabled by one 1908-vintage contact mine.

The *Bridgeton* incident's biggest critic was William Lind, one-time head of the Military Reform Institute and the military adviser to presidential candidate Gary Hart. Lind is now at the conservative Free Congress Foundation and a special military adviser for Senator Slade Gorton, Republican of Washington. Lind still thinks the U.S. minesweeping strategy has big holes in it. The four U.S. sweeps in the Gulf, he says, "don't amount to beans. It doesn't take much to overwhelm a force like that. First, one ship breaks down, then two. If hostilities are involved, it's easy to take another ship out."

Lind's gloomy scenario is hardly farfetched. Three of the four Navy minesweepers in the Gulf were built in the 1950s, making them floating anachronisms in the high-tech Navy. These 170-foot, wood-hulled veterans of foreign wars make charming fishing yachts—John Wayne once owned one—but are notoriously unreliable when it comes to clearing mines. One indication that the Navy expects the occasional collision with a mine is that the bridge of the minesweeper has a canvas canopy. When the sweep enters a mine field, the canopy is rolled back, to give the vessel the look of a maritime convertible. But the point is not for the bridge officers to get a suntan. It's so that they won't hit their heads as they fly through the air on impact.

Even for the more reliable and capable new sweeps, like the one "Avenger"-class ship now in the Gulf, minesweeping is a hit and miss business. Mines are always a step ahead of mine countermeasures. Modern mines can be triggered by a ship's sound, changes in the magnetic field created by a steel hull (which is why minesweepers are wooden-hulled), or the pressure wave caused by a ship plowing through the water. They can float deep beneath the surface, moored to the ocean floor. They can count ships as they pass, detonating when the counter reaches a pre-set number.

Minesweepers are designed to rake mines to the surface and then blast them to pieces, or fool the mine into detonating itself when the ship is hundreds of yards away—beyond the mine's deadly reach. But they don't always work that way. In a 1987 *Washington Post* op-ed titled "How My Ship Swept for Mines: Very, Very Carefully, and We Kept Our Fingers Crossed," assistant managing editor Tom Wilkinson recalls his days as a minesweeping officer. Wilkinson spent a few years sweeping practice mines that blew a smoke signal in the air when detonated. "It was a matter of some conversation on board when the smoke plumes bubbled up fifty feet or so away from the ship," he writes. With a real mine, the ship would have been severely damaged.

For years the U.S. Navy has attempted to elevate minesweeping from its stepchild status by improving on these Korean War-era ships, fitting helicopters with sweep gear, and ordering a new generation of minesweepers. Yet the three-decade-old sweeps are still the backbone of the U.S. fleet. Sikorsky Sea Stallion minesweeping helicopters, like the six in the Gulf, have a limited range (they must be refueled every few hours), can be grounded in foul weather, and are of limited use at night. Lind adds that Sea Stallions can sweep only some types of mines. "They're also extremely vulnerable if there's a fighting situation," he says. "They're not a replacement for ships." Construction of the new Avenger-class "mine countermeasure" ships has been saddled with one delay after another and cost overruns. In 1981 the Reagan administration placed a $1.4 billion order for fourteen new Avenger-class ships, which are longer than the old sweeps, have fiberglass and wood hulls, and carry remote-controlled submersibles that can train TV cameras on submerged mines. Five Avenger-class ships were to be delivered by 1987. With the press onslaught following the *Bridgeton* incident, it was revealed that the ships were two years behind schedule—admirals kept changing designs, gears were installed backward, prototypes were too short to float—and $200 million over budget. To date, only seven of the Avengers have been commissioned.

There are always alternative minesweeping tactics. Lind suggests filling the hulls of supertankers, which are abundant in the Gulf, with buoyant, fireproof material and letting these hard-to-sink ships act like mine sponges. (The wounded *Bridgeton*, for example, made an effective minesweeper for the Navy warships that ended up sailing behind it.) Lind is certain, though, that his idea will remain an idea. "The Pentagon hates off-the-shelf equipment," he says. "It puts someone in some bureaucracy out of a job."

The current Gulf crisis once again has forced the U.S. Navy to rely on its allies' minesweepers. The Brits have chipped in three sweeps and have two more on

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the way, and Belgium is providing two ships from its minesweeping fleet. But other allies are keeping their sweeps at home. The Germans have five sweeps sitting in the eastern Mediterranean, but their constitution forbids them from entering non-NATO areas like the Gulf, a condition the German Embassy says may soon change. The Saudis are known to have sweeps, but their embassy won't reveal their plans.

Should war erupt, and should mines play a minimal role during the entire conflict, it would be wrong to conclude that the U.S. Navy's minesweeping force is adequate. There's a world of difference between being prepared and having luck on your side.

MICHAEL WILLRICH and JON COHEN are Washington writers.

How we helped Iraq get germ weapons.

DEADLY CONTAGION

By Eric Nadler and Robert Windrem

On a bend in the Tigris River, thirty-seven miles southeast of Baghdad, stands the suspected home of Saddam Hussein's biological weapons program. French satellite photos taken two years ago reveal a military-style complex near the small town of Salman Pak, complete with laboratories and large outdoor pens for animals, all surrounded by high walls. Although what goes on there remains a classified mystery, intelligence sources say Iraq now has the capability to deliver significant quantities of deadly organisms via bombs, rockets, and missiles. It has been reported that West German, French, and Soviet technology and equipment have aided Hussein's biological—as well as his nuclear and chemical—weapons endeavors. What has escaped all but minor congressional notice is the U.S. government's possible complicity in building up Saddam's biological arsenal.

Analysts first saw clues to the Iraqi program in the suddenly accelerated pace of development of the country's pharmaceutical sector in the mid-1980s. In a report on Iraq's chemical and biological programs, W. Seth Carus of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy mentions the establishment of the Al-Kindi Company for Serum and Vaccine Production in Baghdad; the planning of the Arab Company for AntiBiotic Industries (a joint venture presumably now in jeopardy between the governments of Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia); the creation of an Iraqi State Company for Drug Industries; and an announcement by Iraqi biotechnologists that they were building a biological "research station" in the southern marshes that would incorporate a genetics research lab.

The Iraqis used analogous fronts to build their clandestine chemical weapons program. At the notorious State Establishment for Pesticide Production in Samarra, seventy miles north of Baghdad, the Iraqis churned out chemical warfare bombs used against Iran and the Kurds. This plant is now suspected of also producing bomb assemblies for biological agents at Salman Pak, where anthrax and botulin toxins—two bio-warfare mainstays—have been produced since 1987, according to U.S. intelligence agents. Anthrax causes fever, shock, and, if inhaled, has a mortality rate of between 80 to 100 percent. Botulism, often fatal, causes vomiting, convulsions, and paralysis. U.S. intelligence sources now also suspect that meningitis and yellow fever are being produced at the site.

Against this backdrop, in late 1988 Senator John McCain's office got wind of the activities of a nonprofit company in Rockville, Maryland—the American Type Culture Collection. The firm has the nation's leading collection of cultured diseases, and acts as a library of microbes for institutions all over the world. With a staff of 217, it curates and manages 1,000 different strains useful in public health programs. The ATCC sells approximately 130,000 cultures annually and ships orders to sixty nations; according to director Robert Stevenson, Iraq has been a customer for twenty years.

In January 1989, at the request of McCain, the State Department investigated ATCC's tularemia sales to Iraq. "We got a clean bill of health" from State, says Stevenson. All of the material sent abroad, he insists, received the proper export permits from the Department of Commerce and a review committee from State and Defense.

But investigators from the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer, and Monetary Affairs have questions about seventeen shipments over the past five years of attenuated strains of various toxins and bacteria to Iraq's Atomic Energy Commission. The commission is located near the rubble that was once Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor, and is believed to be procuring components for biological weapons. No analyst concerned with Iraq weaponry at the Pentagon or in the intelligence community saw these seventeen export applications. Commerce did send two other ATCC licensing requests over to the Pentagon; they were returned with an implicit recommendation that they not be approved, and they weren't. Congressional suspicions were heightened by disclosure that the seventeen export licenses were approved very rapidly—three or four days in most cases—and that some of the material desired by Iraq was relatively expensive: $8,000, in one instance.

Stevenson refuses to identify exactly what he has sent to Iraq. "We're like a Swiss bank that way," says the affable 64-year-old curator. Stevenson, as it happens, heads the Commerce Department's advisory committee on biological exports; it took his word when he insisted there's nothing to worry about, claiming that the materi-

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als he sent are of no use for biological warfare. But even Stevenson concedes that ATCC cultures would be "useful" in a biological warfare program as "reference points" to determine if the deadly strain under development is the real thing. Iraq might also want them to develop vaccines to make its troops immune from the biological equivalent of "friendly fire."

There is no clear evidence that these shipments went to an Iraqi germ warfare program, but there is a scary sloppiness in sending known bio-warfare agents to a warring nation with a reputation for supporting terrorism. Stevenson admits he really can't be sure who's using his microbes: "We're not an international police agency, and we don't have one that we can depend on. We do what we can to make sure responsible people are getting these materials."

Last October Representative Doug Barnard, chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, served subpoenas on the Commerce Department for all information on biological exports to Iraq. Commerce provided only limited data to the subcommittee, and has refused a Freedom of Information Act request by TNR to make this information public, saying the "national interest" would not be served in releasing it. One congressional aide called Commerce's stonewalling "pathetic." Its secretiveness, he says, can be attributed to "national embarrassment, not national interest."

The laid-back attitude of the government's biotechnology fraternity extends to the U.S. Public Health Service. Last April NBC broke the bizarre news that during the 1980s PHS's Centers for Disease Control shipped deadly viruses via Express Mail to researchers in Iraq, South Africa, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and China—all nations suspected of biological warfare research—ostensibly for public health reasons.

The virus requested by, and supplied to, an Iraqi researcher in Basra was an Israeli strain of West Nile encephalitis. The virus had been the subject of a long-term vaccine research project in Israel supported by the U.S. Army because of its potential as a bio-warfare agent. The same virus was a cause of concern inside the Israeli defense forces medical corps due to outbreaks in Negev desert posts in the early 1980s. When NBC asked the CDC to provide documentation of these exports under the Freedom of Information Act, the center said it had no records, since such transfers are handled "informally." Remarkably, CDC staffers expressed no fear that the exported agents (all Biohazard level 3 and 4 materials—the deadliest classification) would be used for germ warfare, "because we know these people," as CDC spokesperson Gayle Lloyd breezily put it. She called any biological war scenario "farfetched." The Israelis were not so sanguine, privately expressing shock at the transfer. And President Bush ordered national security adviser Brent Scowcroft to investigate. (Since NBC's report aired, "there have been no further biological shipments to Iraq," says Chuck Fallis of the CDC.)

The chance of the Iraqis using biological weapons depends, of course, on effective delivery systems. The Iraqis have cluster bombs, the weapon most likely to be adapted for biological use; and they have BM-21 rockets, provided by the Soviet Union. The BM-21s, however, have a short range of fifteen miles and are vulnerable to U.S. aerial bombardment. And the use of either delivery system is precarious. Experts cite the unpredictable behavior of a biological agent once dispersed, the fact that no vaccine for your own troops is 100 percent safe or effective, and the time factor—it would take between twenty-four hours and six weeks (depending on the agent) for the organism to cause disease. But biological warfare does have ready uses for terrorists. Already the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Department of Agriculture regularly conduct exercises on how to deal with terrorist biowar attacks on our shores. An equally likely terrorist target will be Israeli cities.

These terrible scenarios have caused the predictable ripples in the political arena. The hawks, such as former Defense Department official Frank Gaffney, lament the present state of U.S. biowar preparedness. Gaffney, who now heads the Center for Security Policy in Washington, calls the Defense Department's biowar defensive planning "little more than a vestigial, indeed pathetic" operation and urges a "crash program" to counter the Iraqi threat. The military's biowar budget is difficult to decode, given its diversified nature. But Pentagon-watchers calculate that spending on biological defense rose drastically under the Reagan presidency, enjoying an average increase of 37 percent annually from 1980 to 1985, peaking at $90.6 million in 1985 and remaining at a similar level thereafter. Meanwhile, the bio-doves, such as the Council for Responsible Genetics, are praying for peace and worldwide ratification of the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, retention, and transfer of bioweapons. (The convention has been ratified by 110 nations; Iraq has signed but not ratified it.)

For the immediate concerns in the Gulf, U.S. countermeasures are under way. American troops were issued gas masks and are being inoculated against the suspected biohazards in Hussein's arsenal. Doctors at the U.S. Army Medical Institute for Infectious Diseases in Fort Dietrick, Maryland, have formed a special squad to make lightning diagnoses of illnesses felling American troops in the Gulf.

These preparations in the deserts of Arabia signal that biological warfare—a horror out of sci-fi pulp—has arrived. "It is one of our biggest collective nightmares, an attack of deadly invisible bugs," observes Dr. Raymond Zelinskas of the Maryland Biotechnical Institute. Although no one knows the full extent of Hussein's biowar capabilities, his propensity to deploy weapons reviled and outlawed by the world community—even upon his own citizens—is completely clear.

ERIC NADLER is investigative editor of the public television newsmagazine *South Africa Now*. ROBERT WINDREM is a field producer for NBC News.

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A report from Baghdad.

BEFORE THE STORM

By Michael Kelly

BAGHDAD, JANUARY 15

Every once in a while during debate in the Iraqi National Assembly, a delegate or two will actually rise to disagree slightly with the motion put forward. It is a way to show this is a real parliament and not 250 rubber stamps for Saddam Hussein. But the special session called for the morning of January 14, the day before the deadline, was too important to allow for niceties. Not a speaker varied from script in the call for a holy war against the forces of American imperialism.

"The United States is heading for an evil action to destroy not only Iraq but the entire Arab nation!" declared Speaker of Parliament Saadi Mehdi Saleh. "If the United States wants to fight, we are fully determined to challenge it to a long showdown to destroy the invader!" thundered delegate Anwar Kasira. "America has made a crime against humanity!" read Farouq Abdullah. "With blood, with soul, we sacrifice with Saddam!" chanted the entire assembly.

Just after the unanimous vote giving Saddam "all jurisdictional and constitutional powers" necessary to combat "the American threat," the delegate seated behind me tapped me on the shoulder. "Where are you from?" he said.

"Washington, D.C.," I told him.

"Washington!" he exclaimed. "I love Washington! I went to school at Catholic University, and I have a brother at George Washington University." He offered his hand across the seat.

For all I know, surreality is the norm in all Third World dictatorships facing the likelihood of suicidal war with the world's greatest superpower. In such a case, schizophrenia may be merely the sane reaction to an insane situation. But it is certainly true for Baghdad on the brink.

On one level, the entire city is a study in denial. On a sunny afternoon four days before the deadline, Femi Azzat Saloom and his best friend, Abdul Emir Abut, sat in their box at the racetrack. "We are not afraid of war," said Mr. Saloom. "We have been fighting eight years already with the Iranians. Ha ha! Many rockets came, but we stayed always right here at the races. Ha ha!"

"Yes, we stay," said Mr. Abut. "Of course. The rockets of the Americans are no different from the rockets of Iranians." He pointed beyond the horses positioning at the gate. "We saw an Iranian rocket land one day over there, and they didn't even stop the race. Ha ha!"

Even educated people seem unable to grasp the difference between facing human waves of poorly armed Iranians and a force of B-1 bombers and cruise missiles. "We have seen everything in a war that can happen," said Taha Hassan, a war veteran and professor at the Academy of Fine Arts. "Certainly, it will be a difficult war, but we think victory will be with us because our military is very strong. We saw armies like this in the Iranian war."

Every man chose his myth. "I have read many reports from all over Saudi Arabia," confided a newspaper editor. "They say some American privates and sergeants and even some colonels are depressed and do not know what they are doing there." A retired Iraqi army brigadier said, "When you see Saddam on television, he is so sure, so confident of victory. Why? Our army is not so good. We know that. It must be he has a secret weapon, a big surprise."

The newspapers keep up a daily blather. "We will make the confrontation arena a marsh of blood where the American invaders will swim with their corpses floating over, or scattered in, the Arab Sahara," editorialized *Al Qadissiya. Al Thrawa,* the official organ of Saddam's Baath party, assured that "the fate of Bush's forces in the Gulf will be nothing but crushed bones in the desert swimming in their blood."

As if the natural level of false hopes and fat chances in Baghdad were insufficient, every day brought a new, imported crop of charlatans, scoundrels, fools, and men who had mistaken impotence for importance. The flight I took from New York to Amman, the first step to Baghdad, was packed with such; in economy sat a dozen fresh-faced college students, members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a venerable pacifist organization. In first class was a rather more hard-eyed bunch of pacifists: Zhedi Terzi, the PLO's U.N. ambassador; Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam; and ex-Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega. The innocents in economy told me they were aware that they could be used for propaganda purposes. Sure enough, before they even got out of the airport in Amman, Farrakhan swooped down on them at the baggage carousel and grabbed them to his breast as the cameras clicked.

It was all as cheap and tinny as an old kazoo. "The people here are very resolute about this holy war business, but we're not sure that's the right way to go," said Farrakhan's aide Leonard Muhammed on January 12, standing in the lobby of the Al Rasheed Hotel and rolling the words off his tongue with grave pontification. "There is no deadline. No deadline!" shrilled Yasir Arafat on January 14. "In my opinion it is only a date. For me it is a very important date because it is the birthday of Nasser."

The wretched reality was bubbling away just under the rhetoric, as, for the first time in many years, state controls loosened under the strain. Criticizing Saddam is a capital offense here, and reporters who went to Baghdad as recently as a month ago found a society so fearful it was virtually impossible to get anyone but government officials to talk. This time they were besieged by people

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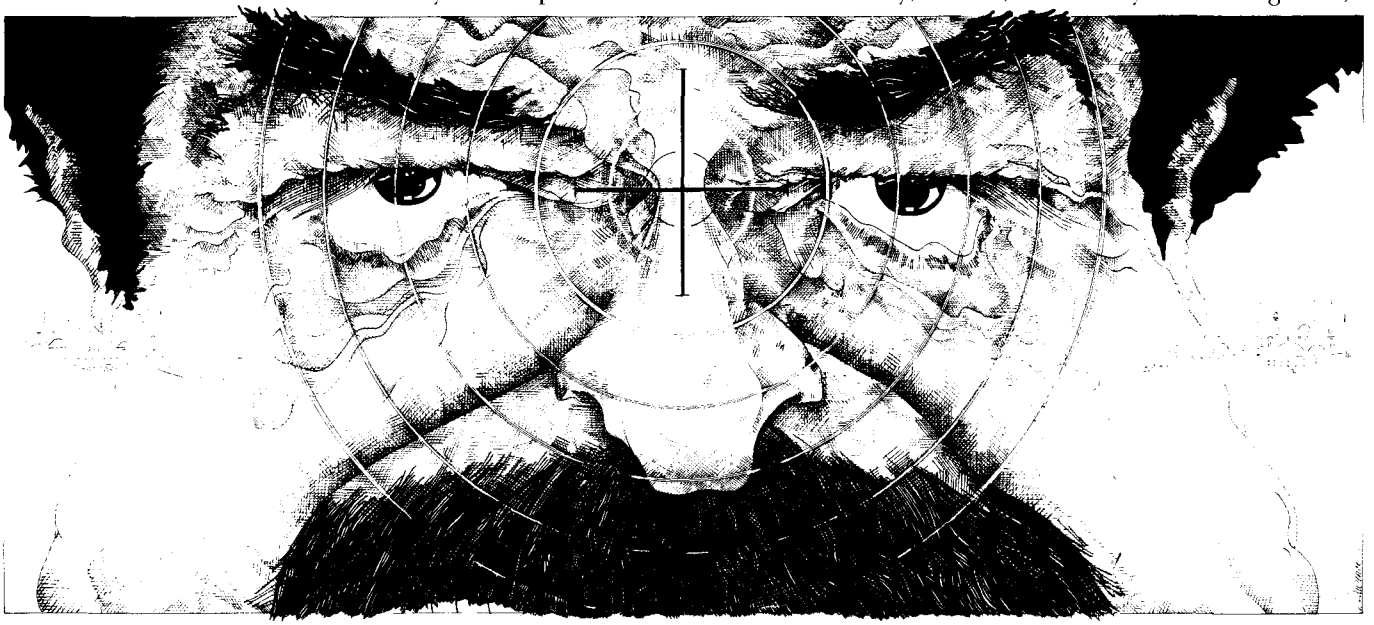
desperate to offer their opinions, most of them making it clear that they did not want this fight at all.

I talked one day to a retired high-ranking military officer, a man who had fought from the first day of the Iraq-Iran war to the last and who had one son in the army in Kuwait, another on the front near Saudi Arabia, and a brother still missing in action in Iran. "We are very tired of war," he said. "I must fight because this is my home, but this is a bad war." He continued, lowering his voice. "From the time I am born here, what have I seen? Many troubles, many wars, many revolutions, many blood. Many men killed. And not only killed—one man I saw they put a rope on the neck and dragged him through the streets." He whispered "I want to go to America. In America a human is human. In Iraq, a human is not human."

Many Iraqis seemed astonished that America had taken the seizure of Kuwait so seriously and depressed to find themselves heading to war with a people they more or less like. The official hate-rhetoric of crushing Americans and making them swim in their own blood had, as far as I could see, no connection with the way the people of Baghdad thought about Americans. It certainly had nothing to do with the way they acted toward the American journalists around town. On the evening of January 13 I dropped by the offices of *Al Jumhuriyah*, the government newspaper whose editorials had been promising the imminent, bloody death of American aggressors. Muhammed Hamza, the front-page editor, spent half an hour recalling his days at the University of Tennessee, dwelling with special delight on the occasions on which he met Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, and Alex Haley. An editorial writer, Issa Al Abadi, had an agonized question. "Do the American people understand the history and culture of my country? Do they ask themselves what these people who are facing a death that is not right are like?"

As January 15 approached, however, the mood of unreality and bewilderment faded. It was replaced by a despondent acceptance that an unwanted, terrible destruction was very close. The rich began slipping out of town on January 12 and 13, heading to summer homes north of the city or rented villas in the countryside. The middle class headed to cities like Hilla, sixty miles away, to stay with relatives. Many fled to the towns of Najaf and Kerbala, which are sacred sites to Shiite Muslims, in the belief the Americans would spare holy land. By January 14 the army had called up every male except necessary government workers, the aged, and the crippled (of which, thanks to the war with Iran, there are a great, great many). The men left behind sent their wives and children to the country and prepared to protect their homes.

One man took me home to show me his set-up: two freezers filled with food, a dozen jerry cans of gasoline, propane, and kerosene, a cooler of water, and a spade for digging a hole in the backyard to hide in when the bombs fell. Hidden away, he had, as do many men in Baghdad, a Kalashnikov automatic rifle, to fight the Americans if they ever got to his house. He was not looking forward to the fighting, he said, but what could he do?



SADDAM HUSSEIN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The National Assembly declared January 15 "The Day of Challenge," in which the people would take to the streets to demonstrate their defiance of America. Schoolchildren and government workers got the day off and were bussed to selected sites. Perhaps as many as half a million people were turned out in Baghdad, and many thousands more in Iraq's other principal cities. The marchers were just about the only folks around. Saddam had tried to keep people in town by passing the word that all government workers who failed to show up at the rally on January 15 would be fired, and all students who skipped it, expelled. It hadn't worked. Baghdad, which is a crowded city of 4 million people, was suddenly full of wide open spaces. Few cars drove on the broad boulevards Saddam built, and the shops were all shuttered and closed.

The day had dawned exceptionally foggy but cleared up somewhat by 11 a.m., when the ministry minders rounded up the reporters to escort them to the protests.

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The one I went to was in a residential neighborhood near a deserted downtown. Thirty thousand were all lined up when we got there, children and bureaucrats with soldiers to guide them. The marchers had banners—"The Citizens of Al Karkh Will Be Martyrs to Defend Our Great Country and Protect Its Complete Sovereignty"—and there was a small school marching band comprising three or four drums and a couple of bugles. Everybody walked along slowly and in order for five city blocks, then turned around and walked back. When the cameras pointed at them, they offered the traditional chants: "Yes! Yes! Saddam! Long Life Saddam! Down! Down! Bush!" The children who had gotten the day off from school were terrifically pleased with the whole thing, but most others seemed as glum as guests at a wake.

A small, neat woman of 30 or so came up to me after a chorus of "Down! Down! Bush!" She wanted something understood. "That just means down, down Bush's policies," she said. "Not down, down Bush personally." I asked her how she was enjoying the demo, and she said she was really not. "Truly, we did not want war," she said. "Because we are still getting over our war with Iran. We want to live in peace, have a happy life. . . . I want to get married and have children. My God says I must get married and have children. But if the war comes, there will be no marriages, I think."

MICHAEL KELLY is a free-lance writer.

Gorbachev's Baltic mistake.

THE FATAL SHORE

By Adam B. Ulam

Stalin made life difficult for his successors, and not only through the consequences of his surrealistic crimes. Part of his legacy, ironically, is a very virtuous and (with some exceptions) democratic-sounding constitution. In the midst of the current crisis in Lithuania, one can only think of Article 72: "Each Union Republic shall retain the right freely to secede from the USSR."

Up until a few years ago that constitutional provision, like much of the rest of the document, remained a feature of the mythology of Soviet political life. To imagine that Lithuania or the Ukraine might ever invoke it would have been as fantastic as to believe that a time might come when there would be real elections to the Supreme Soviet, or when some local authorities, with impunity, would order the statues of Lenin pulled down. But now it is not merely invoked. Blood has been spilled on the streets of Vilnius because of the struggle for independence.

Article 72 has sprung from mythology to life. Practically all of the fifteen Union republics, and even some lesser subdivisions of the huge country, have proclaimed themselves sovereign states and claimed extensive powers, demanding the curtailment of those of the central government. Most are ready to tread the same path as Lithuania. The other two Baltic republics and Georgia have announced their intentions to seek the same status and to secede in the near future from the Soviet Union, which may lead to further bloodshed, on the dimension of a civil war.

Article 72 now stands squarely in front of Mikhail Gorbachev, blocking the further path to perestroika. How can he proceed with building the new structure of Soviet society when tanks are required to keep it together? How is the economy to be reformed when the Russian republic, in assertion of its sovereign rights, has proposed to withhold the prescribed quota of its tax revenues from the Union government, when the Ukraine has declared the intention of introducing its own currency? The brutal repression in Lithuania can only intensify the crisis. What was once the most powerful and centralized state machinery in the world has been threatened, and could soon be struck with paralysis.

The issue that, like a genie let out of the bottle, has grown to enormous proportions is usually dubbed the nationalities problem. It is that and more. Ironically, the current passion for "sovereignty" is the first cousin of the sentiment that made the slogan "all power to the soviets" so popular in 1917, and, appropriated by Lenin, contributed to the Bolsheviks' victory (after which they took all powers away from the soviets). Both have reflected the average citizen's resentment and distrust of the central government's bureaucracy and the desire to bring decision-making on matters affecting his life closer to himself.

It is not only the non-Russian republics that are causing trouble, but also the giant Russian Federated Republic. Its president, Boris Yeltsin, has personal scores to settle with Gorbachev, yet that is only a minor element in the situation. Russia, its prime minister declared recently, ought to run its own economy. Why should it let the Union government regulate the prices of its products and raw materials, thus in effect subsidizing other parts of the country?

Yet incontrovertibly, it is the grievances and memories of the non-Russians that constitute much of the dilemma confronting the beleaguered president and his supporters. Here again Stalin left a burdensome legacy to his successors. The Georgian-born tyrant made Russian nationalism a psychological prop of the Soviet regime, and so it continued into the Brezhnev era. Constitution or no constitution, the spirit of Soviet politics has been better captured by the first two lines of the national anthem: "An unbreakable union of free republics was forged forever by Great Rus," i.e., the

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historical Russian state. And in most cases it was ethnic Russians who ran the "free republics." The highest-ranking non-Russian officials were required to prostrate themselves before Russian nationalism, even as it had been practiced in the czarist era. In 1976, for example, in a speech the First Secretary of the Armenian Communists delivered to the Party Congress, he assured his comrades that there is a folk saying among his people that goes: "Blessed be the sacred hour when the Russians first stepped on Armenian soil" (in plain prose, when they grabbed the country).

For all Gorbachev's great skill as a politician, he failed to recognize the gravity of the nationalities problem. Early in 1987, after firing a native Kazakh as the Party boss of his republic, he replaced him with a Russian. This triggered widespread riots among Kazakh youth, accompanied by numerous casualties and mass arrests. Since then, ethnic disturbances have become endemic over large areas of the Union.

Elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in 1989 brought to it many delegates committed to securing real self-government and complete independence for their republics. In the Baltic states even the majority of the local Communists opted for full sovereignty. Gorbachev's response to this onrush of revolt against the old Communist ways and what remains of them was at first equivocal. But his sense of timing, which he had displayed so superbly when it came to outwitting his conservative opponents within the Party, eventually abandoned him. Had some of his current constitutional initiatives been proposed three or even two years ago, they would have gone far in allaying the unrest and the drift to anarchy. Now they tend to fuel the discontent and lead to further demands.

And so the Soviet Union finds itself embroiled in what has been dubbed the battle of the laws. Armed with fresh presidential powers, Gorbachev began to issue decrees purporting to annul what he claimed were unconstitutional actions of the republics. Conversely, some of the republics legislated that the Union's laws could be valid in their territories only with their consent, and proceeded—among other things—to set up their own military and security forces.

Gorbachev's latest constitutional initiative, the hastily put together Treaty of the Union, is by itself unlikely to ward off the drift toward disintegration. The proposal of a basic law for the USSR is ambiguous and confusing when it comes to separating powers of the center from those of the constituent units. Strangely enough, it envisages the possibility of a republic being expelled from the Union for violating the terms of the Treaty, but it is most unclear as to whether and how a republic could leave the federation by its own volition. Four out of the fifteen republics, as of this writing, have expressed their determination not to accede to the compact. For believers in effective central government, the proposal falls quite short of that and would lead to endless constitutional crises. And for those who are suspicious of Moscow's contrivances, what the treaty offers does not go nearly far enough.

So what can save the country from sinking ever deeper into anarchy? On paper, President Gorbachev has managed to assume enough power to proclaim martial law in unruly regions and govern by decree. But to be an effective dictator in Russia has required not so much legal entitlements as the ability to convey—well, call it frightfulness. This is the meaning of the brutality in Vilnius. But the underlying question still is: Will the multinational army uniformly obey its commanders?

There is another way, which is more consistent with Gorbachev's earlier course. Suppose all of the fifteen republics were acknowledged as immediately and unconditionally independent and *then* were invited to subscribe to a meaningful federal arrangement. Some would choose to stay out, but they might wish to be accommodated through treaty arrangements on the model of the European Community and NATO. Psychologically, such a step would clear the atmosphere and dissociate the notion of restoring political stability from the fears of stifling central controls and of Russian domination of the Union. Now that Gorbachev has chosen the coercive option, one can hardly be hopeful of such a solution. However, it is the only alternative to further repressive measures that would not only eventually be futile but catastrophic in their consequences.

ADAM B. ULAM is professor of history and political science and director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University.

Why the new Germany's a weakling.

ÜBER THE HILL

By Niall Ferguson

Helmut Kohl is a bit plump for the part of Siegfried, Wagner's idealized all-German hero. Yet it is as a kind of modern Siegfried that Kohl has been portrayed in the American media since his triumph as the chancellor of German unity last year. A tide of popular enthusiasm for reunification ensured his victory in December's elections, we are told. And now the Rhinegold of an even larger German economy will confer measureless might on the man from the Palatinate—and on his expanded country. Despite Germany's apparent irrelevance in the Gulf crisis, the united country, according to Timothy Garton Ash in *The New York Review of Books*, is set to be "once again the great power at the center of Europe."

Will it? Such views of German reunification rest on two questionable assumptions: first, that a united Germany

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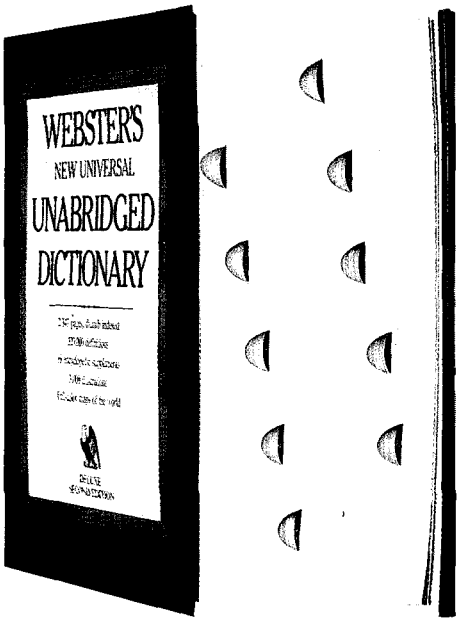

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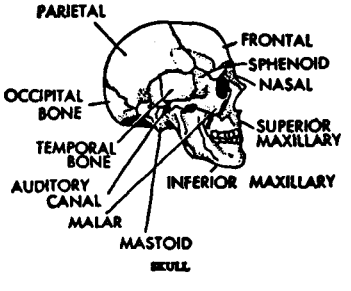

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will be a more nationalist Germany, imbued with a new sense of self-confidence and national pride; and second, that a bigger Germany must be a stronger Germany—that territorial expansion will inevitably lead to economic growth, and thus to greater German international power.

In all of this, a skewed reading of German history has played a critical role. According to this view, the first united Germany rose to world power, thanks to dynamic economic growth, only to end in the horrors of the Third Reich, thanks to an excess of nationalist sentiment. But this is a distortion. In fact, if history is any guide to the future, it suggests that the new Germany will be far from nationalist, and economically weaker than its West German predecessor—a far cry from the assertive superpower of popular imagination.

Consider first the idea that Germany will now have more national self-confidence. In fact, none of the factors that historians believe led to the rise of radical nationalism in post-1870 Germany exists any longer. The cultural tradition of nation-worship, pumped into Germans by generations of shrill professors, is all but extinct. And reactionary social groups like the old Prussian aristocracy, big business, and the petite bourgeoisie have declined, or changed their political ways.

If anything, the intellectual elites treat any hint of Reich-envy with the kind of withering contempt most American professors direct to exhibitions of political incorrectness. In the West educators have striven to create a "postnational" society; in the East, an "anti-fascist" one. To be sure, there are still some social groups attracted by nationalist tub-thumping, but they are marginal, not the phalanx of middle-class voters who supported radical nationalism between 1890 and 1933. Today's neo-Nazis, the Republicans (no relation), are provincial malcontents and hooligans whose main plank is anti-immigration. They did well at elections in Berlin and Baden-Württemberg in 1989. But as with previous West German neo-Nazi bubbles, the Reps' soon burst. As an anti-immigration nationalist party, they foundered when a wave of immigration brought about national reunification.

What about the East Germans? There is some evidence that old-style nationalism has proved more resilient under "real existing socialism" than under liberal democracy, and that unemployed East Germans may vent their frustrations on immigrants from farther east. But there is equally persuasive evidence of the persistence of socialist sentiment in the East, in spite of the last forty years. Neither sentiment has manifested itself in East German voting patterns. The truth is the East Germans have voted consistently for the Kohl coalition: for the conservative CDU and the liberal Free Democrats.

Nationalism is less likely as a social consequence of reunification than a revival of regionalism and secularism. Five newly reconstituted states, each with a strong historical identity, are already making competing claims for help in reconstruction, reviving old East-West rivalries and adding to the more familiar cash-battles between North and South. Reunification also shifts the Federal Republic's center of gravity away from Kohl's Catholic Rhineland and closer to Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's Protestant Saxony-Anhalt. After forty years of a Catholic majority in the Federal Republic, the confessional balance is once again Protestant. That may well dilute the South German Catholic values that have proved so enduring in the Federal Republic, and boost the more secular attitudes on divorce and abortion that have been the Protestant legacy elsewhere in Europe.

The new Germany is unlikely, then, to be particularly nationalist. But will it be economically strong? Even optimists admit that the short-term answer is no. The sheer cost of reunification will weigh down the German economy for some time to come. Since the leap in the dark of monetary and economic unification on July 1, 1990, the government has been spending money hand over fist to avoid a collapse in the East and a mass exodus. At the same time, to reassure West German taxpayers, Kohl plagiarized a pre-election pledge: "No new taxes." Even now, with Finance Minister Theo Waigel unveiling a package of budget cuts, privatizations, and levies, reunification is still largely being financed on credit. The public sector deficit for 1990 will be around 100 billion deutsche marks. This year's is estimated at 140 billion DM, over 5 percent of projected national income. By the end of 1991 the total public debt could reach 1.3 trillion DM—perhaps as much as 54 percent of national income, up from 20 percent in 1970.

It is a situation that Americans will recognize. What may not so readily strike them is that a parallel also lies in the German past. In September 1870 Otto von Bismarck—the German chancellor from 1871 to 1890, to whom Kohl is often improbably compared—made a revealing remark to his son after negotiations with the defeated French. "I said," wrote Bismarck, "that we will talk about the money later; first we want to determine the German frontier." Unity first and hang the cost. True, the defeated French contributed; but within a few years, as the costs of running the new nation continued to rise, Bismarck's Reich had begun to borrow. By 1891 total public debt as a fraction of national income had increased to over 50 percent compared with a figure of 15 percent for Prussia at the start of the wars of unification. It rose steadily (peaking at 120 percent) until the monarchy's demise, as defense spending rocketed before and during the First World War.

This process was repeated by the next two German regimes: the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Between 1924 and 1945 the public debt, in proportion to national income, soared fifty-fold. Moreover, each phase of state-building triggered inflation. Unification in 1870 was followed by a brief inflationary boom and bust on the back of French reparations; the early 1900s built up inflationary pressures that boiled over after 1914, leading to the hyperinflation of 1923. There was a similar inflationary cycle from about 1936 to 1947.

Could it happen again? Certainly a third hyperinflation is not in the cards: the vital monetary constraints, now imposed by the independent Bundesbank, have not been removed as they were in 1914 and 1933, and infla-

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tion is expected to remain just below the OECD average of 3 to 4 percent in the coming two years. Nevertheless, the economic burden of this rising debt should not be underestimated, particularly when so much of the money is being spent on non-productive job creation, and when the world economic outlook is so shaky.

There's nothing, after all, historically inevitable about German economic expansion. Growth in the last united Germany tended to be specific to certain regions—the Rhineland, for example—rather than to the nation as a whole, which was slowed down by large, backward areas in the rural East and South. Aggregate growth rates were erratic, with "good" phases (1871-74, 1892-1900, 1903-13, and 1934-38) outnumbered by long periods of stagnation (1875-91, 1914-33). The high levels of private investment and productivity growth of the 1890s and 1900s have to be set against the miserable record of Weimar and the Third Reich. And only twice in the whole period of German unity from 1871 to 1945 did the Reich achieve the trade surpluses that have been such a lasting feature of West German success—in the recessions of 1926 and 1931, as imports slumped.

This is not to say that a united Germany inevitably means economic weakness; merely that it doesn't necessarily mean economic success. If anything, the worry is not whether five East German states will make the German economy stronger, but whether they will make it weaker. With Saxony and Mecklenburg, the West has been burdened with a rustbelt and a rural backwater that will reduce overall growth just as the old East of Prussia used to. Meanwhile, the German trade surplus is set to fall from 49.3 billion DM in 1990 to 17.9 billion DM in 1992, with some analysts predicting that within five years it will have vanished. And for the export-oriented, oil-dependent German economy, war in the Gulf and world recession spell trouble.

The international implications of economic and political unity become clearer if one asks just how far the last united Germany succeeded in turning its economic base into power abroad. In fact, success was limited. Unification itself between 1866 and 1871 was only possible because of an odd combination of Russian and French weakness. The bids by Bismarck's successors, Bernhard von Bülow and Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, to challenge British naval dominance after 1897 and to check Russian influence in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires were costly failures. The Reich lacked financial resources to outbuild the British admiralty and establish military hegemony over Central Europe. The final gamble, the First World War, ended in disaster.

This failure to turn economic resources into international clout continued from 1919 to 1931, as successive republican governments sought to avoid paying reparations under the Versailles Treaty. It was only the economic collapse of the West and the moral collapse of the League of Nations that enabled Hitler to embark on his program of expansion and "Aryanization." True, it took the full might of the Anglo-American-Russian alliance to stop him. But the brief, spectacular military success of 1939-41 rested on remarkably shaky economic foundations.

In this light, the current predictions of German world domination seem absurdly overdone, and not just because the new Germany is considerably smaller than the Reich and has a declining population. Again, the parallels between the old and the new Germany are revealing. As in 1870, favorable international circumstances in 1989 and 1990 were more important than domestic leadership in bringing about unity. The economic collapse of the Eastern bloc was the decisive factor, opening the border gate for East German citizens fleeing through Hungary and Czechoslovakia during the summer of 1989. Of equal importance was Western confusion: the Bush administration never hesitated in backing its favorite European ally; but the British and the French failed hopelessly to translate their common reservations into a joint plan for delay.

Such Anglo-French disarray has suggested to many that the new Germany will at least dominate the European Community. But here too there are obstacles. First, the French are edgy, concerned by the upward pressure being exerted on European interest and exchange rates as a result of German unification. Second, Bonn's recent attempt to establish rapport with the new British prime minister, John Major, could founder on the vexed question of EC farm subsidies. Even in Eastern Europe it's hard to see the Germans making much of their position. Unlike their counterparts of a hundred years ago, few German businessmen have faith in *Mitteleuropa* as a market. For most Germans, alarmed at the prospect of mass migration by unemployed Slavs, the region is a source of anxiety rather than a potential sphere of influence. And it seems increasingly likely that the estimated 50 billion DM that Bonn has given to Gorbachev will yield scant reward as reform gives way to reaction.

In other words, a close look at the past suggests the reverse of the conventional wisdom on German reunification. United Germans are not necessarily nationalist Germans. Big Germany is not necessarily mighty Germany. As if to underline the point, the present has also provided a simple test of German superpower status: the Gulf crisis. The test has been flunked. First, the crisis has revealed the full extent of popular anti-militarism. The vast majority of Germans oppose war in the Gulf, despite their economy's heavy dependence on the region's oil. Even the token gesture of sending eighteen Luftwaffe jets to Turkey has caused a public furor. Second, the crisis has revealed the limits of the economy as a source of international power. Several German companies have already broken the U.N. embargo of Iraq, fatally undermining Genscher's preference for relying on sanctions to pry Iraq out of Kuwait. The news that the defense budget is going to be cut to help pay the costs of reunification is a further blow to Germany's world-power status. To imagine Helmut Kohl as Siegfried with a paunch is just about possible. But Siegfried without a sword?

NIALL FERGUSON is a fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and a college lecturer in modern European history.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Dealing with Surprises

Go home, Lasse Hallstrom. The Swedish director, who won many of us with *My Life as a Dog*, has made his first American film. It isn't a "sell-out" to Hollywood commerce; it's an attempt to make a picture of feeling, intimacy, character. But **Once Around** (Universal) shows that Hallstrom simply isn't secure in America. Fellini once said that he turned down all the Hollywood offers that came his way because he didn't know how Americans hold their cigarettes. Hallstrom, please heed.

The screenplay by Malia Scotch Marmo has no center. Whenever we think we have homed in on the main character(s), the focus shifts. Neither does the story have any purpose; when it's over, we simply don't understand why we made the journey. Some things happen, then someone dies and they stop happening. The death is only a convenience, a snip of a petty Gordian knot. Everything is left pretty much as it was at the start.

The texture is a trifle better than the characters' names would hint. A supersalesman is called Sam Sharpe. He marries into a loving-quarreling Italian-American family called Bella. Marmo makes some attempt to write these people in depth and to fly free in patches of lyricism. But it's all at about the level of the Golden Age of TV in the 1950s when the writing of Tad Mosel and Reginald Rose et al. was supposed to save the republic. *Once Around* has franker language, still it's built on the aesthetics of the greeting card. And it's full of current TV's chief legacy to our culture: hugging. Boy, do these people hug.

A Bella in her 20s, played by Holly Hunter, falls for a wealthy salesman, Richard Dreyfuss, and brings him home to her family outside Boston. They are aghast at her choice of a gray-haired man, but his whambo-zambo force, if it doesn't quite overwhelm them, gets them to tolerate his presence and his presents. Hunter and Dreyfuss marry, and we think we're in for a rerun of Paddy Chayefsky's *The Middle of the Night*, which was about a May-December couple, but other matters intervene, a whole heaping lot of them. What they all add up to is obscure.

Hallstrom tries to give the film some schwarmerei. He circles embracing couples and dinner tables too often, but he tips in some clever touches, like a moment in which a home movie of Hunter as a child is projected on her very pregnant belly, and he does some slick overhead shooting.

The picture's trouble might be summed up by saying that the best performance comes from Danny Aiello as Bella senior. His dominance throws the whole film off balance. (Still, since this is Aiello's best performance to date, his most intricately inflected, it implies that Hallstrom directed him well.) Dreyfuss has to fight the family's—and our—suspicion that he's going to be revealed as a phony, and he does it with zest. Hunter is treated as a star-to-be, but she doesn't have the makings.

Hallstrom presumably chose this script because he thinks it's a valid piece of Americana, instead of a contraption with its roots in previous contraptions. He ought to go back to Sweden where he knows how people hold their cigarettes.

The film of **Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead** (Cinecom) is itself dead. Tom Stoppard's play, done here in 1967, had undergraduate brightness, the self-admiring exultation of discovering talent in one's self. He centered his play on two minor characters from *Hamlet* (something that W. S. Gilbert once did in a skit) for at least two reasons: to show that major and minor character is not an order of nature but of dramaturgy; and to show that, he says, "a film about two people who never find out why they're killed" is "funny."

The play was a moderately effective piece of mock-philosophical impertinence, a behind-the-scenes glimpse of *Hamlet* showing how existential angst grips two characters offstage. But the film is stone cold, much too static, much too concerned with itsy-bitsy interplay. Stoppard knew that he had trouble. He made his own screen adaptation and directed it himself, and he struggled the whole time to give the picture some liveliness. No luck.

Pauses for sententious "business"; odd musical interpolations; hints of intellectual waste (in the film Rosencrantz

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Awakenings. *From Oliver Sacks's book. Robert De Niro as a post-encephalitic patient, Robin Williams as the doctor who brings him around with L-DOPA. Some Movieland touches, but also some conviction and feeling.(Reviewed 1/7&14/91)* **Dances with Wolves.** *Kevin Costner stars and makes his debut as director. A Union Army officer, alone in the West, discovers American space and Indian life. Though overlong, it's frequently gripping and visually gorgeous.(12/10/90)* **The Godfather: Part III.** *As good—and as questionable—as the first two parts. The plot this time involves the pope.(1/21/91)* **Mr. and Mrs. Bridge.** *Evan S. Connell's two novels about the Bridges, conflated. Much of the tone is retained, some of the subtext is dramatized. Joanne Woodward is a bit too perfect for India, Paul Newman strains slightly as Walter. (12/24/90)* **—SK**

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accidentally makes scientific discoveries, like a paper biplane, that are crushed)—all these are only inadequate artificial respiration for a corpse that just lies there. The interlude on the ship carrying R&G and Hamlet to England, in which they are attacked by pirates and R&G unknowingly take on the fate intended for Hamlet, looks like a feeble imitation of Monty Python.

It all begins when R&G are summoned to Elsinore by King Claudius, per Shakespeare, but Stoppard lets us meet them before they arrive, when they encounter the traveling players who are also en route to the castle. The story—much too full a term—centers on R&G and the First Player, as they move into and through and around Shakespeare, as they demonstrate that foreboding is not the exclusive property of a play's major characters.

But from the start the film muddles the play's sense of unequipped midgets taking center stage, of Eliot's "I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; / Am an attendant lord." It's just leaden gab, decked with prankishness. Nor is the casting of much help. Tim Roth, who recently was abysmal as van Gogh in Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo*, is even worse as Guildenstern—a two-dimensional cutout of an actor with a pinched face and voice. His performance is a drag on Gary Oldman, the Rosencrantz, a sometimes successful actor who might have been better with a better partner. Only Richard Dreyfuss (again!), as the First Player, comes off with distinction. He has flourish.

As for Stoppard's directing, opinion ought to wait until he gets a better script.

Hidden Agenda (Hemdale) has one of the worst titles in recent memory but is a decently made thriller, directed by Ken Loach, about the troubles in Northern Ireland. Brian Cox, a versatile and resourceful actor whom I've seen on the London and New York stage, plays an English detective who is sent to Belfast to investigate two killings. Allegedly done by the IRA, they turn out to be otherwise connected. Cox's inquiry runs into obstructions by British and pro-British authorities.

The screenplay by Jim Allen has one very strange aspect. I can believe that the authorities break the law in aid of what they think are higher ends. But the film proceeds as if Northern Ireland were occupied completely against its will by a foreign force. I can't recall one syllable in the film about the fact that the majority of the people in Northern Ireland are unionist, loyal to Britain. This fact is hardly incidental since it makes the region's agony more complex and more acute. ●

The new musical correctness and its mistakes.

Roll Over Beethoven

BY EDWARD ROTHSTEIN

I.

Art music has led a relatively sheltered existence during recent years. While proposals abound to eliminate Western civilization as a fundamental area of study in universities and high schools, in music such renovations have generally occurred far outside the mainstream. The Western compositional tradition, European in origin, seems fairly intact in concert halls as well as conservatories; and it has also been heartily adopted in China, Japan, Korea, India, and nearly every country that has come in contact with the West, that has had an elite and an educated class able to attend to the Western musical tradition's demands. Western notation and analysis have become central even in the teaching and the preservation of other cultures' musics.

But the political pressures on music have been mounting of late, inspired not least by an awareness that the Western musical tradition is in a condition of crisis. Mainstream performance has settled into a soporific routine of recitation and repetition, with novelty and technique replacing insight and inspiration. Contemporary composition remains the domain of the devoted few, with most of the concert repertoire selected from about a hundred years of music. The state-funded avant-gardish events still draw listeners, but stances of opposition have turned into mannered gestures. Musical literacy and serious amateurism are more boasted about and less prevalent than they ever were.

Even where the audiences exist, moreover, they have become peculiarly stratified. Classical musical culture is a culture of specialized interests. More strikingly in a city like New York, it is largely a racially stratified culture as well: there are almost no black or immigrant faces (aside from Asians) to be seen in concert halls. This is not a matter of ticket prices or accessibility. My neighborhood arts organization, like many others around the country, has been unsuccessful in marketing Western art music to the new racial and international communities in the area, so it has been supplementing such traditional events with evenings presenting the folk musics of immigrant and black cultures. Addressing the same issue in Detroit, the Michigan state legislators took another approach: they threatened to withhold funds from the Detroit Symphony unless the orchestra suspended its audition procedures and hired a black musician, a move that would presumably bring in black listeners. But given that the public education system has abdicated its role in teaching the arts, such methods have generally had no noticeable impact on making Western art music any more appealing to a cross section of the national population.

Musical culture as a whole is ethnically divided. Islands of folk musics float in isolation, and even the classical art-music tradition is treated as the representation of ethnic interests—just another archipelago in a crowded sea. It is no surprise, therefore, that "multiculturalist" arguments, which demand a diminished place for Western culture, have begun to flourish in musical life. On January 6, for example, *The Boston Globe* ran seven pages surveying the Boston art scene under the rubric, "The Fine Arts: A World Without Color," polemically arguing the case for multiculturalism. Article after article asserted that there were intrinsically racist origins to such forms as ballet and continuing racist traditions in such institutions as the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The *Globe* called for a new "representation" in the arts, on both sides of the proscenium, though it was unclear precisely how such a social and artistic goal was to be accomplished, or what role the Western tradition was to play in the multiculturalist future.

More carefully argued was a 1989 report by a "National Task Force on Presenting and Touring the Performing Arts." Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, the task force issued a report written after a series of meetings across the country involving 167 arts presenters. The report is a genteel yet passionate mandate for the transformation of arts presentation in this country. At its foundation is a synthesis of the various

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arguments and attitudes currently in vogue in our cultural and intellectual life. Since the appearance of the report, multiculturalist attacks on schools and institutions have, if anything, vigorously increased.

Presenters of art have surely had to face unusual problems in recent years. Staffs and budgets that flourished during the past few decades now face financial strictures. Organizations have to find ways to justify their annual applications for funds, and also have to find ways to show audience growth and development. For the Task Force, however, the main subject for discussion was "community," which means ethnicity. The report called for "urgent activism" by presenters of performing arts in order to establish the "broadest artistic, social, cultural, and structural contexts" for their presentations.

Contexts, of course, are always to be desired. The context of this report, however, is a call for "cultural equity." One statement, cited approvingly by the authors, asserts that "all the arts and their cultures must be talked about in equal terms." This equality means that few other distinctions are to be made. "Both good and mediocre artists are valuable assets to a community and should both be nourished," said Edwin Romain, a pianist who served on the steering committee of the Task Force. Judgments of the "good," in fact, are to be minimized.

The aim is to eliminate any distinction between or within musics other than on grounds of their origins. Each culture has its music; and so each culture has an equal right to attention and money for the presentation of its music. "Many artists, artforms, and traditions," the report declares, "are still denied adequate recognition, support, and access to stages on which to perform." This means changing the "white male paradigm of an American" and rewriting "the present economic, political, and cultural stories" that constitute our country's culture and its history. Not even the traditional halls are suitable for such rewriting, since "some theaters that were long closed to African Americans remain uncomfortable places for them to attend performances because of that history, even if the artists performing are themselves of African descent."

The prestige once held by the classical musical tradition, in this view, is just a manifestation of the inequitable dominance of a particular culture. The report attributes this dominance to European immigrations from the 1920s to the early 1950s, and to the immigrants' demand for "European-style performing arts events." Such events and institutions were founded, moreover, not because of anything intrinsic to the art itself, but simply as a matter of cultural identity: "European immigrant communities knew that these institutions signaled the presence of their cultures."

It wouldn't matter to the authors of this report that in fact "European-style" musical events began in this country 150 years before they think, and it would certainly not matter to them that such events have some interest beyond mere cultural affirmation. Despite the Task Force's genuflections toward "art," its effect is to redefine the function of the presenter: the urgency is not to reveal something about music itself, not to mount exhibitions and performances on behalf of an artistic vision, not to encourage people to hear things they've never heard before and to engage in acts of musical imagination. The objective is, first and foremost, to achieve "equity" by serving individual "communities" without distinction. "Cultural equity," the report concludes, "acknowledges that every culture has worth, and that its worth must be recognized, expressed, presented, and supported." In the view of the "multiculturalists," music is fundamentally "folk" in character. It functions as a reinforcement of group identity.

II.

There is something attractive about the variety promised by multiculturalism. The largest immigration since the early decades of this century is now occurring in this country, with most arrivals coming from non-European countries, so it is perfectly reasonable to assume that there will be a greater diversity of musics demanded and a greater diversity of musics appreciated. It is also not surprising that this movement should arise in the United States, which has a far less entrenched musical tradition of any kind, and already hosts an extraordinarily diverse assemblage of commercial, folk, and artistic musical cultures.

The polemics have heated up, in fact, at precisely the moment when hardly any polemic is needed. Never have so many different cultures' musics been available for listening. In New York it is possible to hear remarkable performances of African griot music, Indian ragas, Pakistani qawwali, Irish fiddling, Jewish klezmer, chants of Tibetan monasteries, and Andean folk music. These varied musics are proliferating on recordings as well. Once a project undertaken by ethnomusicologists, the recording of other cultures' musics is now supporting a series of record labels. Folkways first offered such music commercially, then came the Nonesuch "Explorer" series, both now available at remainder outlets. Peter Gabriel has presided over a remarkable new series of ethnomusicological recordings called Real World Music. And recent releases by such foreign companies as Ocora (distributed here by Harmonia Mundi) continue the tradition.

These are not, generally, musical curiosities. The diversity and the complexity of the musics are astonishing. There are Tibetan monks who chant their scriptures by sounding three tones at once; deep rumbling bass notes are colored by distinct high overtones, controlled by the mouth's shape, creating eerie harmonies. There are African musicians who travel around the countryside, their calabash gourd drums doubling as cooking utensils; heard in concert, their sounds seem signs of a passing world. There are flutes in Japan that sound as if the wind were blowing over sticks of bamboo, creating subtle microtonal sighs. There is the xylophonic patter of Balinese gamelan groups. There is Swedish folk singing, Swiss yodeling. The more one hears of human musics, the more extraordinary the musical enterprise becomes. Each society has its own instruments, its own musical systems, its own functions for musical activity, its own social organization to support musical activity. In the midst of such variety, novelty, and energy, there hardly seems a reason to oppose the multiculturalists. There also hardly seems a reason for them to be so exercised.

The availability of these musics, however, is not quite what the multiculturalists have in mind. Their argument is really aimed at a particular kind of "equity" that, as in other multiculturalist arguments, is an attack on schooling and funding. Why, the multiculturalists ask, should Western music be studied in schools? Why should it have all the prestige, the funding of corporations, the institutional support of Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, or a score of other arts centers? Why should there be any priority given to European-oriented arts in the midst of ethnic variety?

The multiculturalist argument about music has three basic steps: (1) No judgment can be made between musics on the basis of intrinsic value because there is no hierarchy in the arts. (2) The tradition of Western music has no essential claim on our attention, particularly as our population becomes less and less European in origin and outlook. (3) Our political democracy should be a host to democracy in education and taste as well. Let a hundred flowers bloom, and let none be given more water than another.

The problem is that distinctions and

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differences are rampant when we look more closely at the world's musics, and so are hierarchical classifications. Consider briefly the cultures studied in three recent monographs, published as part of the Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology. These specialized volumes—books remarkable for their relative lack of cant and academic posing—are based on field research and musical analysis, and deal respectively with Cantonese opera (by Bell Young), music of India and Pakistan (by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi), and the songs of the Amazonian Suya Indians (by Anthony Seeger), and they all come with cassette recordings.

Suya Indian songs are chants, accompaniments to rituals and festivals. They are close to what used to be called "folk" music: they have no single author, but are the work of an extensive tradition of performance and ritual. The music serves a communal and tribal function, and it is inseparable from the daily life of the Amazonian Indians. This approach to music may be the most common in world musics. On one Nonesuch record, for example, a song is sung off the island of Tonga while fishing for octopus. Accompanying a modal chant, the canoe is rhythmically struck; the water is heard rippling around a camouflaged stone that is lowered into the ocean as bait. Such music can often be intricate and expressive, with technique closely related to the music's function. The instruments themselves—barely modified natural objects—reflect the premodern activities of the society.

Sufi music of Pakistan, by contrast, is primarily devotional. (It can be heard on a recording of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan on Ocura and a recital by the Sabri Brothers on Real World.) It is far more intricate in its beginning material and far more elaborate in the transformations that it works upon it. Its purpose is to bring an audience to a state of ecstatic involvement with the words being sung, but this is not a transformation dependent on a ritual or a ceremony, as is partly true of the music of the Suya Indians. The invocations of Allah build on each other, so an evening of this music is like a planned induction into a state of mind. And yet this is a music of improvisation. These are not performances meant to be contemplated, or even listened to analytically, apart from the specific event they mark. They are meant, rather, to intoxicate. Their repetitions and variations lead, according to many reports, to a transport of religious ecstasy.

Cantonese opera, to take yet another example, is the closest to what in the West is known as a "high" art. These operas incorporate elaborate scripts, melodically intoned speech, full-scale song, mime, and acrobatics. The stage props are limited, dramatic "types" are constantly invoked along with pre-existing tunes, and the action is highly formalized. The most nearly analogous Western form may be the theater of the Renaissance. Other Chinese music, such as the repertoire of the pipa—a stringed lute that found its niche in the banquets and ceremonies of the aristocracy—is less formal and more pictorial. Its music often recalls the combination of folk rhythms, imagistic writing, and rhythmic poise found in the courtly music of Europe in the seventeenth century.

In any society, the various categories usually invoked to describe these musics ("folk," "religious," "courtly," and "aesthetic") penetrate each other and change their relationships with each other over time. Categories are permeable, but they are also important. They allow us to understand not just what a music succeeds at creating, but what it is attempting to create; they combine social function and stylistic description.

Thus the distinguished ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl has argued that only some civilizations have developed a "high" musical culture. Such a culture, he suggests, is a reflection of the extent to which musical teaching is institutionalized, of the degree of systematization in the music, and of the self-consciousness of its methods of analysis. A high art is also partly characterized by a long performing tradition and a widely varying repertoire. Aside from the Western high music tradition, Nettl points out that the notion of "elite" composition is also evident in the "high civilizations of Asia."

In the "high" musics of India, Iran, Japan, and Java, music is treated as almost a form of objective inquiry, easily separable from custom and culture even in its teaching. "I do not suggest," Nettl writes,

> that other societies, such as American Indians [which Nettl has studied extensively] or Australian aboriginals, lacked ways of teaching their music. But these were rarely distinct formal activities and could not as readily be separated from the ceremonial, religious, social, or enculturative functions of the music.

Moreover, he continues, nearly every culture—whether or not it has a "high" tradition—"tends to have some kind of hierarchy in its musical system, a continuum from some kind of elite to popular." This hierarchy is a matter of complexity and sophistication; it involves subtlety of expression, demands on musical literacy, and intricacy of meaning.

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It is not necessary to be convinced of the universality of such distinctions to see what a peculiar movement multiculturalism is, with its doctrinaire rejection of all such categories. Multiculturalism condescends to the very cultures for which it demands "equity," because it refuses even their own distinctions. Precisely which music a group plays, and the aesthetic or social meaning of that music, are largely matters of indifference to the multiculturalists, who are fixated single-mindedly and coarsely on the music's provenance. In most other cultures, multiculturalist notions would be dismissed as an expression of patronizing ignorance. The puzzle is why they should be taken so seriously here in the West.

III.

The more closely we look at the relationship between multiculturalism and its host culture, the more peculiar it becomes. Multiculturalism is not just about the equivalence of world cultures; it is also about their equivalences *within* Western culture. The tremendous energy of multiculturalism, which now reigns in universities, on public television stations, and in arts organizations, comes not from its noisy enthusiasm for other cultures, but from a frightened response to, and an animus against, the West.

The argument behind the attack has become familiar. Since there is no distinction between high and low in culture, the high prestige of Western culture is owed simply to the West's political power. A defining characteristic of Western culture, moreover, has been an opposition to the "Other." The "Other" is any representative of non-Western culture, any "minority" person or idea. In this reading of Western history, fear and repression of the Other become virtually the dominant theme of our civilization. And the multiculturalists see the same thing happening in the concert halls and arts institutions. The call for "equity," in sum, is a form of domestic anti-imperialism.

This polemic is not without tautological virtues. What culture, after all, does not define itself, at least partly, against the Other? Has any culture ever had an undistorted understanding of the Other? The multiculturalists are also correct, of course, in their conviction that one reason for the influence of Western music was the conquest and the colonization that marked the recent centuries of Western development. Nettl is one of the few ethnomusicologists with the knowledge to survey such a phenomenon. In *The Western Impact on World Music*, he argues that the first Western musics learned by non-Western cultures tended to be either military marches or church music. In Iran, for example, during the nineteenth century, students who became military officers were sent to Europe for their education. French military advisers in 1856 recommended the Westernization of military music; then came general Western musical education. Until the fall of the Shah, Western concert music remained a powerful force in Iran, dwelling side by side with native traditions, influencing them in the development of notation and the idea of repertory. And a more exotic example: in the 1850s the king of Madagascar was so enamored of Western music and its associated prestige that he sent a group of boys to Europe to be educated. They returned to play Rossini and Mozart in the jungles.

During this century, moreover, the Other has often been transformed by the encounter in a new way, as Western culture came to be associated, almost by definition, with the experience of modernity. This affected the underdeveloped regions of the West as well: when Bartók traveled through the villages of Hungary eighty years ago, he pleaded with the peasants to sing him the old songs, the songs sung by parents or grandparents, for he knew that they were fast disappearing, and he wanted to capture at least some using the wax cylinder recorder he carried on his back. In the same way, Pacific Island songs are becoming extremely rare, and in Japan there are organizations known as Hozonkai devoted to the preservation of folk songs.

The actual encounters with the West have produced strange, piquant hybrids. In Burkina Faso a repertory folk music has developed; traditional music that once accompanied seasonal ceremonies in the fields is now performed by urban groups for recreation, divorced from its agricultural context. The most arresting example of cross-fertilization, of course, is the influence of Western pop music on world musical cultures. As Christopher Alan Waterman shows in *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (University of Chicago Press), Juju music of Western Africa involves an overlaying of Western pop music instruments on a preliterate folk tradition, the electric guitar mixing with descendants of ancient Near Eastern instruments to produce native songs set with simple Western harmony. Nearly every "folk" or tribal or religious tradition in the world has been touched by the commercial machinery of Western pop music, its repeated verse structures, its electronic instrumentation, and its triadic harmonies, simplifying and commercializing music as cultural life is transformed.

An orthodox multiculturalist would seem to have reason to be horrified by the nearly imperial power that pop seems to have over the Other. Yet no such horror is evident. One reason may be that for generations the American pop-music industry has been intoxicated with "world music," with Caribbean, African, and Latin American rhythms and harmonies (many of which were themselves influenced by European cultures four and five centuries ago)—hardly evidence of a West dominated by fear of, and opposition to, the Other. If the American blues were inconceivable without their African roots, much contemporary American pop music is no less conceivable without Jamaican or Nigerian or South African influences. In the West, moreover, these traces of the Other sell millions of records.

The truth is that the impact of popular culture, which dwarfs the impact of its high cousin, is of no concern whatsoever to many multiculturalists. They are primarily concerned with the prestige and the power claimed by Western classical music: the high culture of the West is their nemesis. The trouble is that the multiculturalist account of Western high culture has it backward. Despite the disintegrating folk traditions and the impact of colonialism on world musics, a survey of the expanse of the Western musical tradition—the music of the medieval church, the love songs of the trouvères, the dances of the village square, the baroque fugue, the classical sonata, the Romantic symphony, the twentieth-century exploration of systems and sound—fails to reveal a constant opposition to the Other. It gives evidence, instead, of a constant curiosity about, and fascination with, the Other.

The early Christian church used the figures of the Jewish synagogue in its chants. The rhythms and the phrasings of folk dances (the music of the internal Other) made their way into the courts and into the Baroque suite. Contact with Eastern cultures yielded dozens of classical operas with Eastern (Turkish, Indian, Chinese) characters and dance rhythms. (Donizetti became director of music in the Turkish court.) This cannot be dismissed as "Orientalism" in music; the folk musics of the Slavic countries, the rhythms of Spain and Gypsy cultures flourished on the opera stage and in the concert hall as well. And in this century Japanese music influenced the development of Impressionism, jazz and blues became part of the musical vocabulary of European and American music of the 1920s, Indian ragas and African rhythms

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found their way into compositions of the 1960s.

One reason for this cross-fertilization is that Western musical culture, far from condemning the Other to some netherworld of untouchable sound, has cultivated an impassioned interest in the music of different cultures. It has done so in order to gain a new perspective on its own music, and in order to explore the possibilities and the powers of music itself. Contemplating the meaning of music in the eighteenth century, Rousseau turned to Chinese and Persian musics to speculate about the analogies between music and language. The non-Western has been as much a part of the phenomenon of music for many Western composers and writers as native works.

These preoccupations are not incidental to Western musical culture. One of its highest ambitions is to come to knowledge about music itself. Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier," Beethoven's symphonies, Wagner's operas, Debussy's piano works, Webern's serial compositions: these expressive compositions are also encyclopedic projects, attempts to articulate the dimensions and the possibilities of the musical universe. And this kind of project, this analytic ambition, is one of the characteristics of Western art music that has made it a model for aspiring composers across the globe. Nettl points out that one of the appeals of Western music has been the conviction it presented of "universal validity," that it could be learned by anyone, that it is not reserved for a particular caste. Western music, particularly in more recent centuries, often aspired to autonomy—the freedom that each work possesses to establish its own premises and projects independent of patron and occasion—and it is an aspiration that few other cultures have cultivated.

During the last few decades this notion of autonomous art in the West has come under attack, mostly by Marxist critics, arguing that "*l'art pour l'art*" is bourgeois ideology, an attempt to undermine the subversive message of art by pretending that it has nothing whatever to do with the world. Yet subversive messages come with other ambitions as well. Western art music participated in the same cultural energies as other Western enterprises such as science and philosophy, in which the individual perspective is always taken seriously, yet is then generalized, leading in some cases to a transcendental vision. This is as true of Beethoven as it is of Kant. In its developing logic, Beethoven's music is at once introverted *and* ruthlessly objective.

This does not mean that Western art music has discovered some universal truth, or is in exclusive possession of it. It does mean that the will to universal truth is often one of its inspirations. Western art music is far from monolithic or uniform in its expression of this will; it is astonishing how many seemingly incompatible styles and views are represented in the history of Western music, how many folk and religious and courtly and aesthetic traditions coincide. But this impulse to universality helps explain why the West has been so open to the possibilities of other cultures. Though almost all cultures have some interest in the Other, no other culture or tradition, as far as I know, has ever invented something resembling the Western attempt to comprehend the Other through anthropology or ethnomusicology, or has asserted the transcendental perspective through a political vision like Western liberalism or a rational project like Western science.

Multiculturalism has no use for the heritage of liberalism, however, or for the energies of modernity. It is, at bottom, folkish Romanticism gone bad. Its calls for equity derive not from recognized unity, but from enforced difference. It takes other cultures seriously only as representations of the merely particular. Multiculturalism fails to see the Other within us, or us within the Oth-

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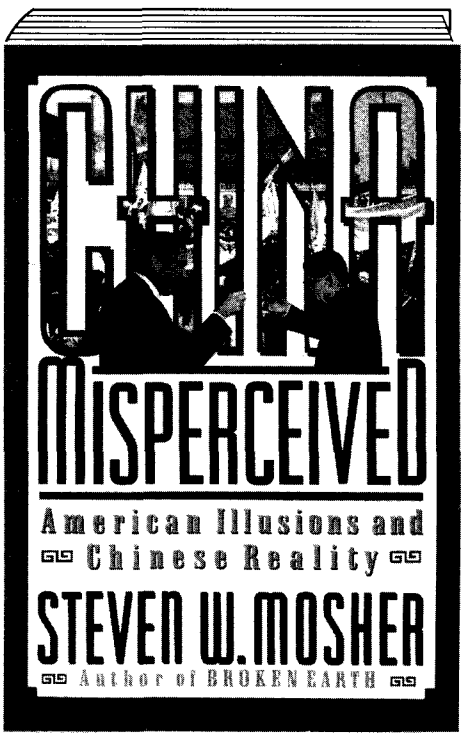

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er. As a result, it undoes the very notion of Western culture.

IV.

This is not an assault from outside. It is disintegration from within. We need only consider the evolution of ethnomusicology to comprehend the transformation. Between 1890 and 1920, the study of other musics focused primarily on "collecting"—on preserving examples of the songs and chants and instrumental performances of other lands. Early ethnomusicologists tended to recognize the similarities between other cultures and emphasize their differences from the West. Then, until after the Second World War, anthropological research was dominant—the study of how music fit into differing cultures, what the musical practices were, how they were taught, and what functions music served.

The intellectual impulse that inspired these attempts at collection and comprehension, however, gradually expanded into the notion that the only way truly to comprehend the Other was to become the Other. Objectification gave way to identification. Beginning in 1960 or so, there seems to have been substantial interest by researchers in becoming adepts of other musics, absorbing them as fully as possible from the inside.

To be sure, this allowed for more intricate understanding of the way in which a culture schooled its musicians, what attitudes were held and what function they played. But it also required a submission to the systems of judgment employed by the culture being studied. At about the same time anthropologists began to debate the problem of "rationality," that is, whether or not there is a legitimate way to understand another culture according to our own standards. Was the conviction that the world was full of spirits and witches and spells any less rational than the assertion that a universal constant appears in the formula for gravitational attraction between two bodies? Neither, the reasoning might go, is fully explained. Lévi-Strauss took Rousseau's fascination with "natural" man a step further, asserting that in fact there was, in primitive societies, as much logic and organization of the world as in the most sophisticated rationalist theories of the West. By the 1960s these views were joined with countercultural romanticism, in which Western rationality was deemed inferior in many respects to the structural universes being revealed in myth and ritual. The words "primitive" and "advanced" began to appear in quotation marks.

At its best, this change in perspective led to a new respect for other cultures, and to new perspectives on our own. After all, the West, too, has its rituals and folk practices, its potlatches and its initiation ceremonies. But the result was also the elimination of distinctions between cultures. For how can cultures be compared once a standpoint outside them all is rejected? The quest of the West for a transcendental perspective backfired; it, too, came to be considered just another cultural bias. Such doubts, when mixed with political energies born of resentment and alienation, have grown to almost antinomian dimensions. And so the achievements of Western transcendentalism have been taken as mere imperialism; the knowledge of the Other as a form of intellectual cannibalism, the extraordinary European traditions of philosophy, literature, law, science, and the arts, as mere ethnic arrogance.

Multiculturalism's obsession with diversity of representation is perverse. It should be obsessed instead with the education of our diverse populations, beginning with a grounding in the tradition that—despite its sometimes grievous failings—is one of the most authentically diverse and ambitiously transcendent we have. But the prospects do not look good.

Multiculturalism is a twisted version of Western teachings, flourishing in the hothouse of a democracy that renders all distinctions suspect and all learning elitist. The multiculturalist is a Western liberal with so large a power of empathy that liberalism itself is dissolved, a rationalist with so transcendental a perspective that reason itself is discarded. The multiculturalist is a universalist without universalism, an artist without a vision of art; a monster child of Western culture; a baleful, unwitting tribute to the tradition he hungers to depose. ●

The Supreme Fictionalist

By David Stern

The Book of J
translated from the Hebrew by David Rosenberg
interpreted by Harold Bloom

(Grove Weidenfeld, 340 pp., $21.95)

Ruin the Sacred Truths:
Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present
by Harold Bloom

(Harvard University Press, 204 pp., $20)

The Poetics of Influence: New and Selected Criticism
by Harold Bloom
edited and with an introduction by John Hollander

(Henry R. Schwab, 496 pp., $39.95, $19.95 paper)

Harold Bloom will appreciate better than anyone the fate of being misread. Having devoted the better part of his career as a literary critic to explicating the necessity of misreading as a prerequisite for what he calls "strong" poetry, it seems poetically just that Bloom's own writing—*The Book of J* in particular, his most recent and best book—should be misinterpreted by nearly everybody, misconstrued as a work of literary criticism about the Bible when in fact it is an audacious if flawed attempt at theology.

Bloom, who emerged in the late '50s and early '60s as one of several young critics instrumental in restoring the Romantic poets to the literary canon, has earned for himself surely the most prodigious and provocative reputation of any American critic of his generation. He first won wider fame with the publication of *The Anxiety of Influence* in 1973. Subtitled "A Theory of Poetry," it recast the history of post-Enlightenment English poetry into the image of a Freudian family romance, "the story of how poets as poets have suffered from other poets."

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In Bloom's account, every emerging poet, or "ephebe," is engaged in an Oedipal struggle for literary life with his precursors, or poetic fathers. Anxious from too much influence, from the feeling of being overwhelmed to the point of creative asphyxiation by the originality of his predecessors, the ephebe's response comes in the form of one or another psycho-poetic defense. These defenses amount to the essential tropes of all poetry, indeed to poetry itself. "A poem is the poet's melancholy at his lack of priority," Bloom wrote in one of his more eloquent moments.

One consequence of this anatomy of poetic melancholy was a revised lineage of "anxious" and "belated" poets, extending in English poetry from Milton to the Romantics, and in American poetry from Emerson and Whitman to Stevens and Ashbury. This lineage drastically altered the shape of the modernist canon, demoting most of modernism itself to a kind of blocked Romanticism. But the most influential idea of *The Anxiety of Influence* was its notion of "misreading." An umbrella term for all the poetic and critical strategies that an ephebe employs in defending himself against a predecessor's influence, "misreading" is how a poet gains the creative nerve to write his own poems. Hence, as Bloom wrote in what has since become his most quotable slogan, "the meaning of a poem is always another poem," by which he really meant that every poem is a misreading, a misprision, of an earlier poem's meaning.

HAROLD BLOOM BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Bloom himself has always been an "antithetical" critic, as John Hollander notes in his graceful, admiring introduction to *The Poetics of Influence*, a helpful anthology of Bloom's writings over the years. Bloom has invariably tended to write against something or someone: the New Criticism, Northrop Frye, structuralism, the varieties of poststructuralism. Yet if there is a single presence in all literary history, past or present, with whom Bloom has himself struggled as ephebe with precursor, it is the colossal figure of T. S. Eliot.

Eliot's influential essay of 1920, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," stands behind *The Anxiety of Influence* like a headache behind a bad mood; virtually every claim in the latter can be read as a renunciation of a corresponding assertion in the former. If Western literary history was, for Eliot, "an ideal order of monuments" to be "if ever so slightly, altered" whenever a new work is introduced into "the ideal order," so as to attain "conformity between the old and the new," for Bloom it is more like a series of palace revolts and familial coups staged by ambitious but insecure young princes against their imperious fathers. For Eliot, the creative act was a "continual surrender of self," the "extinction of personality." For Bloom, it is a continual assertion of self, a relentless attempt at impressing one's personality upon history. And so on.

It is not only Eliot's critical stance against which Bloom has reacted so severely. Even more severe has been his reaction to Eliot's cultural stance, which Eliot summed up in his famous description of himself as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion." One could pick virtually any passage from Eliot's work to exemplify this identity, but the particular expression to which Bloom has probably taken greatest offense is found in the eerily abstracted and ethereal lectures that Eliot delivered on German radio shortly after World War II, which he later published under the title "The Unity of European Culture" in *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*. The unity of European culture, he announced, was Christian culture, and so it remains:

> It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have—until recently—been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance.... If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes.

In an essay published two years ago on the centenary of Eliot's birth, Bloom quoted these lines, reflecting on how little Eliot's idea of Christian culture relates to what we, some forty years later, define as culture. Exactly what Bloom might have had in mind, his own idea of Western culture, can be better glimpsed in *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present*, the book he published that same year. Based on the Norton Lectures delivered at Harvard, the book is a rather disjointed series of six essays that journey through Western literature, making stops at the Bible, Homer, and Dante (with a short detour to Virgil), Shakespeare, Milton, and the Romantics (mainly Blake and Wordsworth), and ending up, predictably enough, with Freud, Kafka, and (briefly) Beckett. The book lacks a single sustained argument, except perhaps the unexceptionable idea that great poetry never accords with conventional religious belief. Mainly, it is an attempt to apply Bloomian categories of misreading to the classics of Western literature.

The point of this effort, however, is not so much to identify the anxieties behind these works as to locate in them the origins of influence itself, of what Bloom elsewhere has called "facticity." A somewhat confusing but suggestive neologism, "facticity" connotes for Bloom the overpowering hold that certain classic texts—the Bible, Kafka, Freud—have on

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our collective cultural mind, by virtue of having created the very categories in which we conceive of culture. These are texts that "read us more fully and vividly than we can ever hope to read" them. More than being simply "classics," these books are the authors of our very selves. They constitute the essence of the Bloomian canon.

Read this way, *Ruin the Sacred Truths* is Bloom's rejoinder to Eliot's Christian culture, Bloom's own elaboration of the Western literary tradition, which he wittily nicknames "J to K." K stands, of course, for Kafka, whose presence, like a hovering spirit, broods over the entire argument. J refers rather more reconditely to the Yahwist, the name given to one of the four hypothetical source-documents that biblical scholars since the nineteenth century have believed underlie the present text of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses in the Hebrew Bible. The Yahwist's title derives from the name Yahweh (in German "Jahwe," hence J), which this source calls the divinity who appears in most English translations as the Lord (as opposed to God, or the Hebrew "Elohim").

As a putative source, J is assumed to have contained most of the famous narratives from the second account of creation beginning in Genesis 2:4 to the revelation at Mount Sinai in Exodus 34, though *not* including the Ten Commandments themselves; and such stories as those of Balaam (Numbers 22) and the death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34:1-6). To the extent that a consensus about these matters exists, scholars agree that the Yahwist is the oldest of the four main sources, and was composed sometime in the ninth or tenth centuries B.C.E. The other source-documents are those of the Elohist (E), who uses the name Elohim for God and probably wrote shortly after the Yahwist; the Deuteronomist (D), the author of the book of Deuteronomy, completed around the seventh century B.C.E.; and P, the Priestly source, dated to sometime between the sixth and the fourth centuries B.C.E., which comprises most of the priestly rituals and cultic laws in the Bible. According to the Documentary Hypothesis, as this theory about the Bible's composition is known, these four sources (and, according to some, as many as five or six sources) were joined and edited into a single text by an anonymous redactor, known to scholars as R, sometime before the fourth century B.C.E.

As for what "J to K" represents, Bloom is disarmingly vague, except to imply that it designates a kind of biblical or Yahwistic sensibility toward things. We are told, for example, that Hamlet's way of negation "is biblical in origin, which is why it seems so Freudian to us, because Freudian negation is biblical and not Hegelian, as it were." But what is biblical about Freudian negation, or biblical about any kind of negation? We are never told. What is clear to a reader of *Ruin the Sacred Truths*, however, is that the spirit of the Yahwist, whether or not it animates the classics of Western literature, definitely animates Bloom. The best sections in the book, the only ones in which he seems truly engaged with his material, are those dealing with the Bible, or with other Jewish topics, such as Freud's implicit Jewishness, or Kafka's.

The Jewish element in Bloom is not new. In his first book, *Shelley's Mythmaking*, Bloom used Martin Buber's philosophy of I and Thou as a foil for discussing Romanticism. And most famously of all, in *Kabbalah and Criticism*, in a juxtaposition that he himself confided might seem "lunatic," Jewish mystical traditions were invoked and explored as paradigms for the anxieties of influence. Yet reading through the selections in *The Poetics of Influence*, through these essays spanning Bloom's entire career, one is struck by how continuously Jewish elements recur in his writings, and only more so in recent years, when his freshest and most powerful writing has been about the Bible. Now, in *The Book of J*, he has finally produced a book-length study of the Yahwist, in which his stated objective is nothing less than to recover this writer as "one of the small group of Western authors we identify with the Sublime."

The Book of J consists of a translation of the Yahwist's document by the poet and editor David Rosenberg, accompanied by a series of introductory essays, commentaries, and conclusions by Bloom. The first thing to be said about this book is that the idea of printing the Yahwist document on its own, as a separate text, was brilliant. Seeing J's narrative apart from its context, even if in fragments, one gets a vivid picture of what the Bible's early sources might have been like. Alas, Rosenberg's translation of the document is not successful. Seeking to capture the "poetic" individuality of J's voice, he has managed to escape the faceless banality and committee-ish impersonality that plague most contemporary Bible translations. But in straining to reproduce the dense verbal art of the Yahwist's "original narrative voice and flow," his rendition is full of awkward locutions in English ("It is not good the man be alone"; "Judah was his name, the finish to her having of children"; "It was scalding to Yahweh; to Moses, his heart was singed"); odd and incorrect translations ("holocaust" for *minhah*, a gift or tribute offering; "contempt" for *ra'ah*, "evil"); forced, almost silly puns ("Jacob" because "he might jaywalk behind me"); and the unnecessary insertion of phrases and similes not present in the original Hebrew (the Dylanesque "blown in the wind," gratuitously added to Cain's curse in Genesis 4:12).

Some have suggested that Bloom, whose control of Hebrew seems from several indications to be less than perfect, was misled by Rosenberg's translations into committing some of his more egregious misinterpretations. My impression is the opposite: that Rosenberg's translation was produced with Bloom's reading in mind. A brief example of a subtle distortion that is typical of both Rosenberg's translation and Bloom's interpretation of J's meaning will illustrate what I mean. In Genesis 4:4, after giving birth to Cain, Eve declares, "*kaniti ish et adonai*," a line usually translated as "I have gained [or "gotten" or "acquired"] a man with the help of the Lord." Rosenberg translates it as "I have created a man as Yahweh has."

In context, Eve's statement is a kind of punning pseudo-etymology on *Kayin*, as Cain's name is pronounced in Hebrew, and the verb *kaniti*. Rosenberg's translation of the latter, "I have created," is a rather inspired rendition of a difficult verb, and it draws, I suppose, upon a similar Ugaritic root with that meaning recently noted by Bible scholars, notably Nahum Sarna. It is not this part of Rosenberg's translation that is suspicious, however, but its conclusion: "as Yahweh has." Here again, the meaning of the Hebrew particle *et*, as it appears in the Bible, is problematic, but there is little justification for taking the words *et adonai* to mean "just like God," a translation that turns Eve's etiological statement into a boasting challenge, into a kind of Promethean, Byronesque vaunting of creative power.

Rosenberg's distorted rendition, however, is perfectly consonant with Bloom's reading of J, an interpretation that sees the Yahwist document as being about the same thing that Bloom sees as the theme of all strong literature: the agonistic struggle for the Sublime, or what in this book Bloom calls "the Blessing"—the promise of immortality, "more life, and the promise of yet more life, into a time without boundaries." All strong writers face this struggle, and Bloom's J, one of the strongest, is no different.

The interest of the literary endeavor, for Bloom, has always lain in the expression of personality—the personality of

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the poet, the personality of the critic—and so it is no surprise that he should instinctively believe that the Yahwist, or J, was a recognizable person, not a mere editor, let alone a document or a hypothetical source. Now, in this book, Bloom reveals to us the Yahwist's precise identity. J was a woman, living in the early tenth century, a member of the royal court of Solomon's son and successor Rehoboam of Judah, probably a princess herself, perhaps even David's granddaughter.

Whether or not she was of royal blood, this J, according to Bloom, lived with the memory of David's achievements, in the long shadow of his glory. She knew firsthand the intellectual and material splendor of the Solomonic court and its enlightened secularism. But she also had the unlucky fate of outliving Solomon, of having to witness the inglorious and indifferent reign of Rehoboam, whose petty history is narrated in 2 Samuel by the writer known as the Court Historian, a figure who was, in Bloom's surmise, J's contemporary and friendly literary rival.

Virtually all the critical and journalistic ballyhoo surrounding the appearance of this book has revolved around Bloom's insistence on J's gender, and so it is worth saying at the outset that this is the book's least interesting idea. Bloom in no way intends his proposal to be an endorsement of a feminist approach to the Bible, nor is it his intention to add a chapter to the history of forgotten women writers. His strongest reason for supposing that J was a female is his "increasing sense of the astonishing difference between J and every other biblical writer," along with his feeling that J's most sympathetic and complex characters, such as Tamar, Rebecca, and Zipporah, are all females—a feeling that is at least corroborated by Bloom's treatments of these characters' stories in the Bible, which do happen to be among the best parts of *his* commentary. Still, this is hardly proof of J's gender. The same logic would lead us to conclude that the author of *Madame Bovary* was a woman.

The real problem with Bloom's speculation about J's gender is that he himself is unclear as to how seriously he wishes it to be taken, or whether he intends it mainly as a provocation. "Since I am aware that my vision of J will be condemned as a fancy or fiction, I will begin by pointing out that all our accounts of the Bible are scholarly fictions or religious fantasies," he writes disingenuously. Yes, in some ultimate sense, all scholarship, all religious beliefs, are fictions or fantasies. Some are more fictitious, more fantastic. Or less fantastic. In fact, most of Bloom's historical arguments in the book, not only the ones about J's gender, are extremely conjectural, even though most (including the gender question) have been broached in the past by one biblical scholar or another. These include Bloom's dating of J; his claim that she lived in Rehoboam's court; the suggestion that she was of royal stock; the allusions to Rehoboam's name buried in a number of Hebrew words; the close relationship that supposedly existed between J and the Court Historian. All these factual assertions are much less certain than Bloom pronounces them to be.

Still, this is not a book aiming to persuade Bible scholars. It is directed to another audience, to the reader disaffected from the Bible in its canonized form as either Torah (in Judaism) or Old Testament (in Christianity), as a document of sacred law and divine history. J is a Bible with virtually no law or history. It is, instead, a surpassing narrative, one lying beyond all the familiar genres of Western literature. And above all it is the work of a writer of astonishing originality whose cognitive power is "unmatched among Western writers until Shakespeare," and who, Bloom claims, was literally buried by her successors, that is, by the founders of Judaism and Christianity—revised, censored, and mutilated by them, until she and her narrative alike have become virtually unrecognizable.

The real J, whom Bloom seeks to rescue from oblivion, was neither a historian nor a theologian, nor even a religiously inclined writer. She was, he insists, a teller of tales, surpassingly ironic and sophisticated, essentially "a comic writer . . . in the difficult mode of Kafka" who brought her imaginative vision to bear upon telling, or retelling, the early history of her nation, the people of Israel, and their God, Yahweh. Although J's narrative, Bloom acknowledges, must inevitably testify to an "archaic Judaism," to more ancient traditions that J received, she herself did not write out of pious motives or religious belief. She wrote for the same Bloomian reason that anyone of immense literary power writes, now or then: to gain "the Blessing."

"The Blessing," immortality, fame, the spreading of one's name, "more life," the uninhibited "expression of personality"—these are the main themes of J's narrative. The patriarchs and the ancestors of Israel, all "theomorphic" men who share Yahweh's best features and his worst, incessantly strive to gain the Blessing. J's real protagonist, though, is Yahweh himself, and he is as different from the God of "normative" Judaism and Christianity as J is from the rest of the Bible. "Impish," a "sublime mischief-maker," Yahweh is a literary character, nothing more or less. His main attributes are not holiness or righteousness or justice, the features usually associated with God, but "vitalism" and "uncanniness." A kind of unpredictable life force, J's Yahweh is a God who can eat roasted calf with Abraham yet seek to kill Moses. He is a God to beware; and J's own attitude toward him resembled, Bloom tells us, that of "a mother's somewhat wary but still proudly amused stance toward a favorite son who has grown up to be benignly powerful but also eccentrically irascible."

J's narrative, in Bloom's account, consists of Yahweh's repeated efforts at "trying on" the Blessing—on the patriarchs,

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The Stonecutter

St. John the Divine and I lunch
together each day: the Twinkies, the
apple as usual and the distant

trumpets, listen. Sit down here,
there's plenty for two, do you dare?
See—all day you chip and cut:

the stone remains infinitely
resistible and then bingo! I leave a
saint behind, his blade high,

just so. What? Does anyone care?
I punch out at night and leave all these
created lives: Anselm, St. George

shielding the realm, sword ready,
the flaming dragon (absolute hell
to do, imagine), Francis knelt down

for the laying on of hands,
all the tiny creatures (and I made some
up) at his feet, such holy things—

when I call it quits, still they
stand! Sure freezes are tough, and bird-
shit: what can I say? but verily

at times the circling wings up there
make a halo; you'd swear what I was doing
kept them in the air, weightless

like high music, note by note.
Look: let me show you, chisel the angle
thus, it is a process of less

and less until some shape emerges
exalted and you turn away. Yes, you grasp
this handle, hey, it could be your

own soul you feel, when you get the
feel . . . lightning shot out of quartz blocks;
more immortals emerge, so

many gifts suddenly unwrapped
from sheer granite. Life is one huge
unfinished cathedral! Here,

handle the nothing, carve it
with a sense—not sixth, more like
Sistine, that something immense

rises higher even as less and less
remains visible. OK, back to reality,
friend, come again and try,

do you dare? Sometimes the sun sets
I cannot let go, the sparks and stars, every-
where, peopled with real angels

see, imagine your own sky, you
can even touch, a heaven on this same plane
but oh less, endlessly less.

MICHAEL DECKER

on Moses, finally on the people of Israel in their entirety—while he awaits the arrival of King David, the only figure in history who will prove himself truly capable of carrying the promise of the Blessing to fruition. For J, however, David is "always in the future," beyond the compass of her book. Within her narrative's confines, no one, except for a few women, is truly able to bear the Blessing.

Even Yahweh finds his moment of truth. It occurs at Mount Sinai, when he seeks to extend the Blessing from a few chosen theomorphic individuals to an entire people, the nation of Israel. Caught up in a "crisis of representation," not knowing whether to let himself be seen or not, Yahweh is overcome with anxiety; at one moment he invites the Israelites to approach him, at the next he warns them not to come too close. Nor does Yahweh ever quite recover from this crisis. After Sinai, he loses his early dialectical, crafty self, his freedom from all inhibitions. While the Israelites wander through the desert for the subsequent forty years, he becomes increasingly anxious, "an intensely nervous leader of an unruly rabble," prone to uncontrollable fury whenever his creatures manifest what he regards as the least disrespect.

This Blakean portrait of Yahweh, which Bloom gleefully pronounces both "scandalous" and "blasphemous," is the heart of his reading of J. As a piece of Bloomian misreading, it is utterly compelling. This is partly because his handling of the text is so deft, and partly because his Yahweh is so entirely disturbing—I was about to say, unpleasant—a being. A kind of unchecked Nietzschean will to power let loose on the world, Yahweh is "in no way morally or spiritually superior to the builders of Babel. . . . We seek fame and Yahweh scatters us, that every name be scattered also, except his own." It does no good to object that this thoroughly amoral Yahweh, beyond all good and evil, is antithetical to every conception of God in Judaism, and in nearly any other religion, since that is precisely Bloom's argument. So, too, it is entirely beside the point to note that theomorphism, the all-consuming desire to be a god that Bloom sees as the main ambition of virtually all the patriarchs and revered ancestors of Israel, is fundamentally opposed to the deepest values in Jewish tradition.

It does make one wonder, though, why Bloom should find this disturbed figure of Yahweh so attractive, why he should so enthusiastically embrace the theomorphic Sublime as his own ideal. A good part of the answer to both questions lies in Bloom's attitude to J's later successors and readers, all those who make up what he repeatedly refers to as the "normative" tradition—first E, P, D, and R, then the clerics of Judaism and Christianity, even most modern Bible scholars. All these religious types, he argues, have been unable to abide J's anthropomorphic portrait of Yahweh: they have preferred Yahweh to be a concept rather than a personality, and have sought to press him into their respective clerical services rather than appreciate his uncanny vitalism. And so, Bloom argues, J has consistently been misread; her Yahweh has been theologized into a holy abstraction, her deep ironies turned into flat moralizations, the originality of her imagination all but effaced.

On all these points, Bloom is at best only partly correct, at least factually. The early rabbis, for example, often imagined God in even more anthropomorphic terms than J does, and none more so than the disciples of Akiba, the famous sage of the second century C.E., whom Bloom singles out as the foremost exemplar of the religion of the rabbis. On the other hand, when Jewish philosophers like Philo or Maimonides felt the need to allegorize or to explain away J's anthropomorphisms, it was hardly out of a failure of imagination, as Bloom implies, but for good philosophical reason. Even today, there are those among us who would find repugnant the thought of God burning with anger through his nostrils, let alone feasting on roasted calf.

To be sure, Bloom is correct in asserting that J's Yahweh is not identical to the God of the rabbis, just as J's Judaism, if one can even use that word to describe her religious beliefs, must have been very different from the religion of the rabbis living a millennium later. Still, for all but the most religiously orthodox readers of the Bible, such an assertion is merely a truism. And Bloom's parallel claim that while J's successors worshiped Yahweh, J herself did not, is more questionable on its own terms. Even if Yahweh was a personality rather than a concept, why could J have not worshiped him? J's religion

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was assuredly different than the rabbis', but how do we know that it was any less "normative" for her time?

The "normative" is the least examined idea in Bloom's book. As he uses it, the term sounds like nothing more than a depressing "religious establishment," a platitudinous authoritarian image that may have been born of endless afternoons passed unhappily in Hebrew school. In fact, the notion of normativity in Judaism, as in any religious tradition with a long history, is deeply problematic, and Bloom should know this from his studies in the history of the Kabbalah. There is not, in Jewish history, a single "normative" Judaism, not even within a single historical period. And there is no better evidence for the problematic nature of the normative in Judaism than the Bible itself: in its final canonized form this single text preserved, side by side, without discrimination or comment, at least four sources with wholly different ideologies and programs. Nor did the discrepancies in the biblical text go unnoticed by its later exegetes in the "normative" tradition. But these commentators did not deny or suppress them. Instead, they turned the Bible's lacunae and inconsistencies into occasions for interpretation, into spurs for meditation on the Bible's "deeper" meaning, for the discovery of the hidden unity of the divine will.

Bloom's suggestion that the "normative tradition" was a conspiratorial force that continuously has sought to bury and to repress his hapless J is pretty much a chimera, a straw man. But it is Bloom's sense of himself as outside the normative, wherever that may be, that is the key to his project of recovery. Although he appears to ground his reading of J on the Documentary Hypothesis, a scholarly theory with established credentials, its inspiration is really beyond scholarship. To recover J's originality, Bloom tells us, he requires a method of reading that is "partly outside every normative tradition whatsoever, or if inevitably inside, however unwittingly, then inside with a considerable difference."

Here, again, exactly what Bloom means by "outside every normative tradition" is ambiguous. At times it seems to amount simply to "literary." All he wishes, Bloom modestly disclaims, is to restore J as a writer, albeit a writer with the talent of Shakespeare. At other times, though, Bloom's claim to being outside every "normative" tradition means something more substantive, more subversive. And indeed, the real model for Bloom's antithetical criticism is an ancient interpretive tradition that has been customarily considered outside "normative" tradition. I refer to gnostic exegesis.

Like Bloom, the early Gnostics, who were later branded as "heretical" by the "normative" Christian church, read the Bible against its grain, in the light of their own dualistic religious beliefs. Their goal, though, was expressly to reveal the real identity of the Old Testament God, who, they tried to show, was the evil demiurge, a false world-creator, rather than the true and unknowable divinity, the object of all authentic Gnosis. Bloom has frequently cited the Gnostics admiringly, and though he seeks in his new book to distance his readings from theirs, along with those of "normative" Judaism and Christianity, the Gnostics are his unacknowledged methodological precursors. Like the Gnostics, Bloom's goal is to retrieve an all-but-hidden divinity.

That divinity, however, is not Yahweh, but *his* creator, J. Like Yahweh, J is "uncanny," "ironic," "a visionary of incommensurates." Indeed, J happens to be the single wholly theomorphic character in *The Book of J*. She is Yahweh's sole rival. J's very Bloomian "divinity" is her originality, her "facticity." Because she has discovered the very ways in which we represent ourselves to others, our notions of personality and human behavior, J's influence on us is, with Shakespeare's, so overwhelming that we are "contained" by her. She defies all representation, since she defined the very modes of representation that we must employ to represent her. She is, quite literally, our creator.

Early in the book, after Bloom makes his point that J's Yahweh is a literary character, he notes (with a little too much pleasure) that this fact makes all subsequent Western religion into the worship of a literary character. Unfortunately Bloom is himself not exempt from this charge. He has simply exchanged the Supreme Being for the Supreme Fiction—or the Supreme Fictionalist. Behind this adulation of the writer, students of literature will easily recognize a late version of the Romantic belief in poetry as personal religion, the worship of the imagination as an inner divinity. Yahweh is J's "awakened imagination," Bloom writes in a happy line. Well, J is Bloom's awakened imagination.

There is more at stake here than belated Romanticism. Cynthia Ozick once attacked Bloom for "idol-making," for positing a view of literature that effectively (and, according to Ozick, correctly) showed it to be an idol; and by "idol" she meant not just an object of false or deluded worship, but a Moloch-idol, a fiery consumer of helpless children, a usurper of divinity by violence. And worst of all, Ozick argued, Bloom knows that he is an idol-maker. He is, she wrote, "a system-builder who is aware that a closed, internalized system is an idol, and that an idol, without power in itself, is nevertheless a perilous, indeed a sinister, taint in the world."

The one mistake in Ozick's characterization of Bloom is the assertion that his idol is literature. It is not. Bloom's idol is the poet, the strong writer, the writer possessed of "facticity," that stranglehold on our cultural imagination that we must all struggle to escape, Bloom claims, just as Jacob wrestled with the angel of God. For Bloom, these strong writers, "J to K," are both our gods and our adversaries. However ambivalently, they possess authority. They speak to him. They share in "the strong light of the canonical, of that perfection which destroys."

Bloom has borrowed this evocative, haunting phrase from Gershom Scholem, the great modern scholar of Jewish mysticism, who coined it to describe Kafka. "The Strong Light of the Canonical" is also the title of a series of three lectures that Bloom delivered in New York in 1985, which were later printed privately as a small pamphlet. Subtitled "Kafka, Freud and Scholem as Revisionists of Jewish Culture and Thought," the first two lectures in the pamphlet, on Kafka and Freud respectively, are identical with the sections on these writers in *Ruin the Sacred Truths*. The third lecture, however, has not (to the best of my knowledge) been reprinted. Dealing with Scholem, it is a kind of key to the secret of "J to K," but it is most important for what it reveals about Bloom's own ambitions.

For Bloom, Scholem is "Miltonic," a titanic figure. By having single-handedly restored Jewish mysticism to its rightful place in the history of Judaism, and by having revealed a mythical presence at the very heart of "normative" Jewish tradition, Scholem epitomizes for Bloom the scholar as strong misreader. The historian of Kabbalah, Bloom rhapsodizes, is its "epic poet." Scholem is "a philological equivalent of Kafka." Although his writing was cloaked in the guise of traditional philology, Scholem was in Bloom's view the bearer of a new Kabbalah, a new Gnosis. Its message is precisely our alienation from the normative.

Bloom's understanding of Scholem is a misreading, in both the literal and the Bloomian sense. Scholem's greatness, in Bloom's eyes, lay not in his scholarly achievements, in his massive reconstruction of an entire tradition of esoteric Jew-

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ish speculation, but in the profoundly revisionist impact of his researches. These entirely transformed our conception of Jewish existence in its historical totality. Scholem proved, Bloom writes, "that the normative tradition, rather like any normative personality, is largely a shifting series of masks." And all that remains of Judaism are the shifting masks: "The indubitable effect [of Scholem's work, along with Kafka's and Freud's] upon all subsequent Jewish writing is to remind us that there is only interpretation."

If Eliot is Bloom's authentic precursor, Scholem may be said to represent his true ideal. "J to K," which is Bloom's answer to Eliot's "Christian culture," is also Bloom's attempt to discover an equivalent to the Kabbalistic tradition that Scholem located at the center of Judaism. "J to K" is Bloom's Jewish counter tradition, the antithetical presence suppressed by the Jewish "normative." And Scholem, with Freud and Kafka, is himself part of the antithetical tradition. Indeed, as Bloom tells us at the end of his essay, Scholem, with Kafka and Freud, constitutes nothing less than the essence of Jewishness today.

But there is a significant difference, alas, between Scholem's Kabbalah and Bloom's "J to K." For all its mystical craziness, Kabbalah possessed a genuine spiritual power that responded to deep religious needs. What attracts Bloom to Kabbalah, by contrast, is not its spirituality, but the anarchism implied in Scholem's history of it. "J to K" itself is spiritually empty. Its only teaching is that all meaning is wandering meaning. At best, "J to K" is a Jewish High Culture ("an amalgam of imaginative literature, psychoanalysis, and a kind of Kabbalah"), but it lacks a Judaism.

How might a Jewish High Culture exist without a Judaism? Bloom himself is aware of the question; he calls it "most curious." And yet, he insists, what offers itself as normative Judaism—Torah, Talmud, midrash, and so on—does not speak to him, whereas "Kafka, Freud, and Scholem, unlikely but inevitable triad, do." What Bloom fails to recognize is that there exists in modern Jewish intellectual life a strong precedent of disaffected intellectuals not unlike himself, who, for all their alienation from the religious tradition, have found a Jewish life for themselves in studying it. Scholem himself was of this type. However unobservant he was in his religious practice, however enlightened and secularized were his scholarly methods, and unorthodox his historicizing conclusions, in his devotion to textual study as a path to perfection Scholem was wholly within the bounds of "normative" Jewish tradition. In fact, it is hard to conceive of anything more normative in Judaism than this kind of devotion, the "piety" of the intellect.

To Bloom, however, such study does not offer itself as a path to anything. The normative tradition does not warrant intellectual interest. It is there only to be overcome, to be escaped from. One must admire him for his honesty about all this, for his forthrightness in standing by his estrangement from Jewish tradition, for his refusal to settle for any traditional palliative. And judging from *The Book of J*'s success in the bookstores, it would seem that his adversary stance has struck a powerful chord among many readers. There appears to be an audience for a Jewish High Culture without Judaism. Still, for all its literary energy, its fresh insights, its seductive surprises, *The Book of J* represents a tradition that preserves and transmits nothing. Scholem would not have been impressed.

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Homegrown Radical

BY C. VANN WOODWARD

Letters of Eugene V. Debs, 1874-1926 edited by J. Robert Constantine

(University of Illinois Press, three vols., 684 pp., 592 pp., 676 pp., $120)

Eugene Victor Debs (1855-1926) and V. I. Lenin (1870-1924) were contemporaries. Both men were of middle-class origins, both called themselves socialists, headed parties of that persuasion, and dedicated their lives to promoting the cause. At this point, however, the similarities end and the contrasts set in; and it is the contrasts that prove to be the more important.

Debs's differences derive mainly from those that have long divided American radicals into two camps, the indigenous and the imitative. In an illuminating discussion of the two camps, David De Leon has pointed out that while the American imitators of foreign radicalism have received more attention and caused more alarm than the homegrown variety, it is the indigenous radicals who have gained the greater following and left the deeper influence in American history. Rooted in two centuries of independent religious and cultural experience, as well as in politics, American radicals represented, in Emerson's words, "new lands, new men, new thoughts." They were radical in the sense of seeking complete realization of the democratic potential, radical in their antistatism, abolitionism, libertarianism, and in their suspicion, if not hostility, toward centralized authority of any kind. The radicalism of American socialists, though seeking the overthrow of capitalism, was characterized and expressed as much, if not more, by what it opposed as by what it proposed.

Eugene V. Debs, in spite of some appearance to the contrary, definitely belonged to the American camp of indigenous radicals. His numerous European connections and associations might suggest otherwise: his parents were immigrants from Alsace, he was their first child, and they spoke French in the family; and both in the labor movement and later in the Socialist Party, Americans of foreign origin or culture, particularly Germanic, were prominent and numerous among Debs's friends and comrades. While the sincerity of his socialist convictions cannot be doubted, the fundamental principles of Debsian Socialism breathed an air of individual freedom, equality, and democracy. The radicalism came of an insistence on the actual practice and consistent observance of these principles and the socialism from an extension of democracy to the economic realm.

Neither socialism nor radicalism was a family tradition or an adolescent conversion for Debs. He did not arrive at these commitments until he was in his 40s, and the course that he pursued toward them was long, convoluted, and often rough. He entered the railroad union movement as a conservative and remained one for twenty years, preaching the harmony of interests between capital and labor. Two months after the devastating loss of the great railroad strike of 1877, young Debs, then 22, asked a Locomotive Firemen's union convention, "Does the Brotherhood encourage strikers?" and continued, "We most emphatically answer, No, Brothers. To disregard the laws which govern our land? To destroy

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the last vestige of order. . . . We say again, No, a thousand times No." Two years later he declared in an editorial in its magazine that "we feel ourselves in duty bound . . . to give to railway corporations a class of sober and industrious men." They in turn would say: "Well done, my good and faithful servants." He held up one employer, a Terre Haute capitalist who had done him financial and political favors, as "the model railroad president" and said that workers should accept such men as models themselves.

Debs entered politics as a Democrat and a workers' representative, but he was by no means anti-capitalist. In 1885, still an advocate of "harmony," he voted with a Republican majority for a bill that Democrats attacked as anti-labor. He still believed that the "Mission" of his union was "not to antagonize capital. Strikes do that; hence we oppose strikes as a remedy for the ills of which labor complains." He also rejected boycotts and violence of any kind. America offered to all "a free and equal chance to go to the supreme height of all that can be desired of earthly grandeur. We all have a fair chance and an open field." The same year, at 30, Debs married the daughter of a wealthy family of Terre Haute. With money inherited in 1890, she built them an ostentatious home in a fashionable part of town. A childless marriage, it soon proved ill-starred.

The years sketched above, half the lifetime of Debs, command only twenty-six of over 1,800 pages in the three volumes reviewed here, and the four crucial years following, up to the Pullman Strike of 1894, add only that many more pages. The disparity is no fault of the editor, J. Robert Constantine, who admits that it is "most serious and disappointing," and explains that Debs and his brother Theodore "systematically and periodically" destroyed correspondence for lack of filing space. Also responsible for a microfilm edition of *The Papers of Eugene V. Debs 1834-1945* that contains thousands of letters not included in these volumes, Constantine is better informed than anyone else about surviving correspondence and its relative importance. His editorial work is thorough and scrupulous, and his annotation rich with identification of obscure people and the meaning of obscure passages. This is a valuable contribution to American history.

Between 1888 and 1894, Eugene Debs underwent a reassessment of his naive assumptions about "harmony" between labor and capital and a transformation of his strategy, tactics, and leadership of labor unions. Never one for self-analysis, Debs regarded changing events as suffi-

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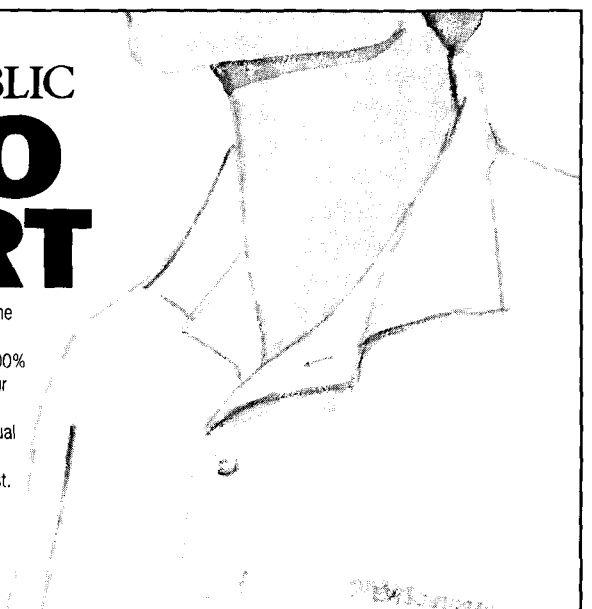

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cient explanation for his changing views. Most important was the total defeat of a prolonged strike in 1888 against the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad. It was a shattering experience for him as a minor strike leader and a critical turning point in his career. Strikes now became "the weapon of the oppressed," a traditional American right that "the nation had for its cornerstone." As a Democratic campaigner in 1888, he attacked Republican presidential candidate Benjamin Harrison for opposing the strike of 1877, which Debs himself had once denounced.

He despaired of craft unions, turned to industrial unions, and founded the American Railway Union. The fledgling union won an astounding victory over James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad in April 1894 and before regaining its breath declared a sympathetic boycott of trains pulling Pullman cars. Perhaps the most notable strike in American history, it paralyzed the economies of twenty-seven states and territories—of the western half of the nation. President Cleveland sent troops to protect the mail cars. Debs defied a federal court injunction against the strike and went to jail for six months. By then he was the most famous labor leader in the country.

It is in the remaining years of Debs's life that the letters in the Constantine volumes become more numerous and revealing. He described the celebration of his release from jail as "a mammoth affair," with "a vast hall packed to the doors" with 4,000 admirers and an ovation that "cannot be described." In Chicago he addressed a rally of an estimated 100,000. He was assured by the Populist Henry Demarest Lloyd that "the name of Mr. Debs is an open sesame the world over." He forbade the use of his name for the presidential nomination of the Populist Party by the party convention in 1896, but he later wrote that "in that year I was a Populist in my party affiliation," and supported Bryan as that party's nominee. "Not until January 1st 1897 did I cease to be a Populist and on that day I issued a public letter avowing myself a Socialist."

Debs called the Pullman Strike "my first practical lesson in Socialism, though wholly unaware that it was called by that name." Until then he claimed to have remained in "blissful ignorance" with but a "hazy conception." Yet he had read and admired Gronlund's popularization of Marxism and later observed that he owed his conversion more to Gronlund than to Marx. Victor Berger, the Milwaukee Socialist, brought him a copy of *Das Kapital*, and he later thanked Karl Kautsky for a photograph and for reminding him of "our gallant comrades across the water." But it is doubtful that he ever read very deeply in Marx, to whom he referred ten years later as "Cark Marx."

Debs's personal life and his career as Socialist leader are faithfully treated by two of several biographies, Ray Ginger's *The Bending Cross* (1949) and Nick Salvatore's *Eugene V. Debs* (1982). The *Letters*, rich as they are, disclose nothing that demands significant revision of these or more detailed studies. Debs's fondness for drink and occasional visits to brothels, even his late-blooming love affair with a neighbor's wife, have become public knowledge. So have the facts of his five campaigns for president in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, "the harvest year," and the one in 1920 while he was serving two and a half years in prison for violation of the Espionage Act. In prison he became his party's martyred hero, "Saint Gene," some comrades called him.

This is not to suggest that the newly published letters are unneeded or unrewarding. Quite the contrary, they serve to endow the "facts" of his public career with the pulse of his personal feelings, ambitions, and expectations. They help us understand what drove this driven man, and what it was like to be so driven. "It's my lot to fight & by God I'm putting in full time. . . . I'll make history before I get through," he wrote his brother in 1902. And to Morris Hillquit in 1908: "I cannot speak worth a minute's listening if I do not speak with all the intensity of my nature. The result is that when I am through I am drenched with perspiration and there is hardly a dry thread in my clothes." Then into an open buggy or car and on across country to the next stop, "wet with sweat from head to foot," three or more speeches a day, whatever the weather. He often fell ill. He returned home rarely and then only to collapse with ailments and recover just enough to set forth again. And in 1915, "God must have inspired me. I spoke two hours. I gave them all hell . . . every word from my soul & it set them afire & when I quit, soaked with sweat, they gobbled me up." Public speaking was a different experience prior to radio and TV. Of "the criminal coal barons" of West Virginia, he declared in 1913, "there is nothing in Russia or Mexico more utterly and damnably despotic and debauching . . . a burning disgrace to the whole nation."

Debs never seemed to get enough of the "love and devotion of my countrymen [which] poured and roared and rushed in." He returned it abundantly in his speeches and with an effusiveness in his letters that can be embarrassing to read. He was a loving man. He was also a man of wrath. While his references to Christ were frequent, and he once said socialism was but the realization of Christianity, his was the Christ scourging Pharisees and money changers from the temple. Much as he deplored factionalism among his comrades, he could turn some of his wrath against offending members on occasion. One he pronounced a "cur" and a "skunk," and he told another to "go to hell with your professed friendship."

Though Debs helped start the IWW, he came to deplore "its deadly work in the name of socialism" under Big Bill Haywood, whom he considered more an anarchist than a socialist. By 1914 he thought "the very name of the IWW is offensive to the great mass of workers," and the same was true of the Socialist Labor Party, both of which he considered irresponsibly anarchistic. Debs had hailed the Bolshevik Revolution as "the soul of a new born world" and professed loyalty to its cause, though not to the Third International. But by 1921 he thought that the Soviet government had taken on an "appalling" and "despotic" aspect and feared that Russia "has actually swapped dictators." In 1926, his last year of life, he deplored the "cruel and reprehensible policy of the Soviet government" and the thousands in Russian prisons "undergoing the most fiendish torture."

All along, however, Gene Debs reserved his most powerful invective and his most devastating eloquence for use against enemies at home, against Americans engaged in betraying American ideals for their own profit. His targets were corporate greed and brutality, injustice from the courts, corruption in the government, thievery in banking and finance, and abuse of the helpless all around. The greatest heritage that he left was his example of fearlessness and his conviction in opposing wrong. Nothing quite like him has turned up since. ●

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

as an act of defiance against the newly elected non-Communist government in Croatia, which Mr. Dubajic still calls the "fascist" state. The Croatian government has recently issued a warrant for Mr. Dubajic's arrest, but judging by the support he enjoys in the still Communist republic of Serbia, it is unlikely that he will ever be apprehended. In an ethnically fractured country like Yugoslavia, henchmen are frequently perceived as freedom fighters, just as war dead can be easily used for various political purposes.

TOMISLAV SUNIC
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Talk show

THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF SELF-congratulation as Congress debated on war with Iraq last Saturday. Though divisions ran deep, the disputation itself, according to speakers in the House and Senate, was a magnificent example of democratic deliberation. Most reporters covering the talkathon joined in heralding it as a rare departure from business as usual, during which even our most venal legislators searched their souls, arrived at courageous, independent conclusions, and spoke their minds without reference to political advantage or partisan rancor. Sounds splendid, doesn't it? Unfortunately, the view from the gallery where I was sitting was not so flattering. There may well have been less log-rolling and arm-twisting than usual in major legislative battles, but as a forensic exercise, the great war debate was massively disappointing.

THE BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT CONgress simply doesn't debate. Debate means listening to an antagonist's arguments, finding flaws, and responding with criticism. This happens daily in London, Ottawa, Jerusalem, even in Cape Town, but seldom if ever on Capitol Hill. For starters, no one in Congress listens to anyone else. Until the final hours on Saturday, both chambers were nearly empty. Most of those in attendance on the floor were merely waiting to recite staff-generated speeches. Others needed permission to "revise and extend" their remarks, which means inserting boilerplate directly into the *Congressional Record* without reading it aloud. "I envisioned an extraordinary session of Congress with every member of Congress on the floor in rapt attention, all of the media broadcasting throughout the nation, the galleries packed," said Ron Dellums, Democrat of Berkeley. So, naively, did I. What we got was close to the opposite.

ON THE SENATE SIDE THE CONtroversy was especially monotonous. The fabulously long-winded Joe Biden of Delaware bored on for nearly an hour on each of two separate days in support of the anti-war resolution sponsored by Senators Sam Nunn and George Mitchell. He said nothing fresh or novel, and made no effort to engage the legitimate arguments for the use of force. Much of his address repeated platitudes about the value of a full and frank debate. In ordinary life, the fact that somebody has just said something is reason for not saying it again. In Congress this rule applies in the reverse: if somebody says something that sounds intelligent, you are advised to appropriate the remark and go on record with it yourself. Biden is a pioneer in this area.

I DON'T MEAN TO SAY THERE wasn't eloquent oratory. There was. In both houses, it was the anti-war speakers who gave the most passionate and theatrical performances. The best, for my money, were John R. Lewis in the House, a decorated veteran of the freedom rides who is King's true rhetorical successor; and Paul Wellstone, the junior senator from Minnesota, whose maiden address was infused with an unmatched intensity of feeling. Rocking back and forth, the elfin professor Wellstone declared he could accept the death of one of his children in some wars, but not in a war with Iraq. Simplistic, perhaps, but effective, even moving. The Senate's senior academician, Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, who followed Wellstone, could not have presented a sharper stylistic contrast. Moynihan's preferred mode of discourse is the digressive ramble, characterized by a donnish, lazy brilliance. His clipped, affected delivery makes him largely unintelligible to anyone standing at a remove of more than a few feet, but one feels that of all the members of Congress, only he would hack it in the House of Lords. Moynihan noted that Iraq was a product of the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920; its precise borders were drawn in a tent in 1925 by a British colonial official. The Arabian oil dome, which made Iraq and Kuwait rich, was discovered by a Stanford professor in 1938; Woodrow Wilson collapsed in Pueblo, Colorado, twenty days after he spoke in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 5, 1919, in support of the Treaty of Versailles; Iraqi dinars are printed on high-quality paper in London; and so on. The relevance of these facts was no more evident than the need for words like "modalities" and "armageddonnic." Moynihan uses them for the reason Paul Simon wears bow ties: it's his signature. In Moynihan's view, Kuwait, "singularly nasty," "conspicuously poisonous," its anti-Semitism "at the level of the personally loathsome," is not a country worth defending. But he undermined this point by overreaching: his contention that Kuwait's government was "just as nasty" as Iraq's was absurd.

THE MOST CONVINCING SPEAKERS were those who related personal experiences or described changes of heart. Dave Boren of Oklahoma buttressed his anti-war stand with a poignant story about seeing off his home county's National Guard unit, which he used to command. "I could name 80 percent of the families that were represented in that Guard unit," he said. "They are not strangers. They are my neighbors. I know them. They are real people to me." Among the hawks, I admired John Danforth of Missouri, an Episcopal minister who many expected to vote with the Democrats. Danforth said he changed his mind when he came to believe sanctions wouldn't bring down Saddam. The weirdest speaker was Robert Byrd of West Virginia, whose historical reference point was not Vietnam or Munich, but the Punic Wars. In an unintentional parody of Moynihan, Byrd huffed and puffed about Fabius Buteo, Scipio Africanus, Cornelius Scipio, and Tiberius Sempronius Longus until he started to confuse his noble Romans. Speech multo longus. Point non erat.

I SQUIRMED LESS IN THE HOUSE, where congressmen give four-minute sermonettes instead of half-hour lectures. There were even a few skirmishes. When Joe Kennedy of Boston made an obnoxious remark about John Wayne and the "misguided machismo mentality in America," Republican Gerald Solomon of New York blew him out of the water with a quote from his uncle, John F. Kennedy, about the need to check aggression. Fed up with the repetitious application of the Munich analogy, Barney Frank of Massachusetts pointed out that we have already stopped Saddam's advance as we failed to arrest Hitler's in 1938. "Saudi Arabia is Czechoslovakia, if you want to use Munich," he said, "and we sent hundreds of thousands of troops." Frank wins credit for daring to display his wit amid the approved mood of monastic solemnity. Addressing the charge that Congress risked undermining the president's policy if it voted against him, Frank cracked: "What are we, the Canadian Consulate?" Based on what I saw, Barney, you're not far off.

JACOB WEISBERG

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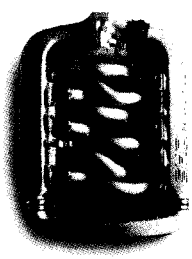

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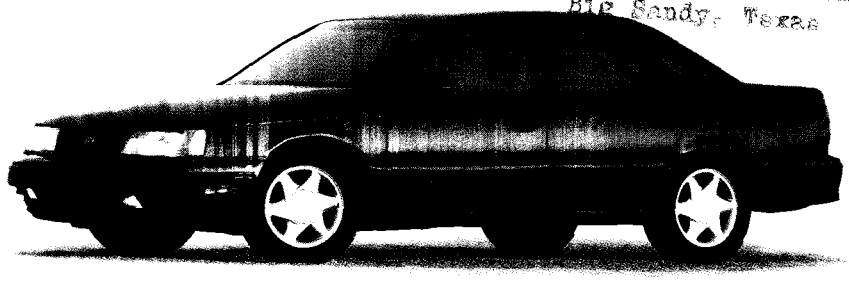

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